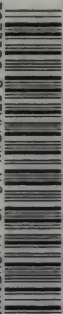


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THOMAS HOOD

POEMS OF THOMAS HOOD

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY WALTER JERROLD



HENRY FROWDE
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THOMAS HOOD

Born, Poultry, London . . . May 23, 1799
Died, St. John's Wood, London . . May 3, 1845

The present selection from Hood's Poems was first published in 'The World's Classics' in the year 1907.

INTRODUCTION

I

AMID the rich literature of the first half of the nineteenth century—a literature of the most varied character in both prose and poetry—the name of Thomas Hood occupies a peculiarly individual place. We may say that as a serious poet he began by deriving much from Keats, we may even hazard suggestions as to the exemplars from whom he learned with unique aptitude his peculiar mastery of comic verse, but in following his life-story, in reading his work, we find him very soon occupying a definite place of his own. The only volume of serious poetry which he published showed at once the ‘school’ to which he belonged, but it showed also that he was a writer of marked individuality, a poet who could rely upon his own genius. That volume for reasons which we shall recognize had no successor.

Of mixed Scotch and English parentage, Thomas Hood was born in the City of London on May 23, 1799. His father was a native of Errol, in the Tayside Carse o’ Gowrie, and after serving an apprenticeship to a Dundee bookseller came—other Scotsmen have been known to do the same thing—to London to seek his fortune. He entered a publishing establishment and in the closing years of the eighteenth century was a partner in the firm of Vernor & Hood, whose place of business was at 31 Poultry, and it was there that the poet was born. His mother, Elizabeth Sands, was sister of a well-known engraver.

After getting the rudiments of education at a dame’s school in the city Hood went to Wanostrocht’s Academy

for Young Gentlemen at Camberwell¹, but was recalled home by the death of his father in 1811. At this time the family was living at Islington and the boy went to a school in the neighbourhood for a while. His only brother died shortly after their father, and he himself seems to have given distressing evidence of ill health. After a brief spell as clerk in a city office, he turned to engraving, but for neither of these sedentary occupations was he fitted, and a serious breakdown of health was the consequence.

In the late summer of 1815 the boy was ordered a complete change and went by sea to Dundee on a visit to his unknown relatives. While there he made his first appearance in print, and wrote at least two considerable works in verse. What was to have been a brief holiday was lengthened into about a two years' stay, and Hood then returned to London with his health well set up. Again he turned to engraving for an occupation, for he had to bear his part not only in supporting himself but in looking after his mother and four sisters. He was apprenticed to an engraver—presumably his uncle—and after an unusually short period of apprenticeship set up in work for himself, being—judging from his letters of the time—kept fairly busy, though but little of his work as an engraver is now traceable.

Already Hood had shown a decided bent for literature, had joined a society the members of which listened to each other's lucubrations in prose and verse, and had soon written enough in the latter medium to contemplate a volume. Just at the time when he seemed to have settled down to a professional life as an engraver, with a taste for letters as a hobby, came the event which indirectly altered the course of his career. At the beginning of 1820 there was commenced the *London Magazine*—the magazine in which as 'Elia' Charles

¹ When writing his 'Ode on a Distant Prospect of Clapham Academy' Hood probably changed the locality of his old school of set purpose.

Lamb was to publish his most famous writings—and a year later John Scott, the clever editor of that miscellany, was killed in a duel. The magazine was shortly after sold, and the new proprietors were Messrs. Taylor & Hessey—old friends of Hood the publisher; to that publisher's son they offered an appointment as sub-editor, and in the summer of 1821 Thomas Hood was definitely launched on his new career. The change was a very important one for a young man: not only did it give him the opportunity of expressing himself, but it had the result—scarcely less valuable for the development of individuality—of placing him in intimate relation with congenial souls, of introducing him to a fresh, stimulating, and valuable circle of friends. He got to know all of the remarkable band of contributors—Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey, Allan Cunningham, John Hamilton Reynolds, and others—that the late editor of *The London* had enlisted in the service of the magazine, and he became intimate with some of them. The affectionate friendship here begun with Lamb lasted through life, while the friendship with Reynolds was to have more significant results—the two were to collaborate in literary work, and in the person of Reynolds's sister Hood met his future wife.

In May, 1825, Thomas Hood and Jane Reynolds were married. Three months earlier Hood and Reynolds had collaborated in a little volume, published anonymously, of 'Odes and Addresses to Great People.' This book set all folk a-laughing and was instantly successful; Coleridge thought that it must have been written by Lamb, and it may be said to have set the seal on Hood's work from the outset, for two thirds of the volume—and the best two thirds—were from his pen. In the two next years, he followed it up with a couple of series of 'Whims and Oddities' in prose and verse, and henceforward—despite the deep seriousness of the man—it was as comic poet, as humorist, as punster, that his contemporaries insisted upon regarding him. In 1827 came his only volume of serious poems—a remarkable volume, though the reading public did not recognize it

as such—and the story runs that he had to buy up the work himself to save it from the hands of the butter dealers ! In the same year he issued a couple of volumes of prose ‘National Tales’—exciting romances the scenes of which are set in various countries of Europe ; in 1829 he published the ‘Epping Hunt’ and edited *The Gem*, and in 1830 began issuing *The Comic Annual*, a work in which for several years he centred his talents both as writer and draftsman.

In 1834, shortly after the publication of his one long novel, *Tylney Hall*, owing to the failure of a firm in which he was concerned, Hood gave up all he had to the creditors and lived abroad—in Coblenz and Ostend—for some years, that he might economize. In 1837 he contributed the ‘Ode to Rae Wilson, Esq.’ to the *Athenaeum* ; in 1839 he brought together much of the prose and verse of the *Comic Annuals* into *Hood’s Own*, and in 1840 published *Up the Rhine*. Shortly after his return to England he was, on the death of Theodore Hook, appointed editor of Colburn’s *New Monthly Magazine*, to which he had already begun to contribute some of the most remarkable of his poetry, combining depth of thought and feeling with sparkling wit and humour. At the beginning of 1844, having quarrelled with Colburn, he started *Hood’s Magazine* : and on May 3, 1845, he died, after many months of lingering illness at Devonshire Lodge, New Finchley Road, St. John’s Wood. Never robust in health, he had suffered much from heart, lung, and other troubles for nearly ten years, and latterly had been writing his work from an invalid’s couch.

II

It has been said in the preceding brief summary of Hood’s life that he only published one volume of serious poetry, and that in 1827, shortly after he had established himself in the popular favour as a humorist. That he did not repeat the experiment was the fault of the reading public. He never lost his love for poetry,

nor his need for expressing himself by its means, though such expression was published for the most part in magazines and other periodicals. The 1827 volume was entitled 'The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies, Hero and Leander, Lycus the Centaur, and other Poems,' the miscellaneous pieces including some which have since taken their places among his best known work, 'Fair Ines'—a lyric which ranks with the best that we have—the 'Retrospective Review,' 'I Remember, I Remember,' 'Ruth,' and some noble sonnets. Though the volume fell flat at the time, later years have given it an honoured place in the poetry of the nineteenth century; it won the suffrages of that acute and honourable minority, the decision of which in the long run is generally ratified or at least accepted by the majority.

Edgar Allan Poe—writing at a time when Hood was yet known to the many chiefly as a master of fun—described him as 'one of the noblest, and, speaking of Fancy, one of the most singularly fanciful of modern poets,' though later the same critic admitted that in certain poems he gave evidence of the higher qualities of imagination. In the longer pieces of the volume named the poet was still to a certain extent derivative; his very themes were such as might have been chosen, for instance, by Keats, for whose work he had the greatest admiration. It was in his later poems—poems written at a time when he had to be 'funny' for daily bread—that he reached the greatest imaginative heights, but these poems, having been written and published in one or other of the magazines with which he was connected, were never reprinted until zealous admirers collected them after his death. The grim 'Dream of Eugene Aram,' which had appeared in *The Gem* the year before, was published separately in 1830, and until his closing years was probably the best known of Hood's serious writings. Later he was to blend seriousness and humour so inextricably that the poems in which they were to be rendered should defy classification—continuing the vein which he had started in one or two of the 'Odes and Addresses,' such, for

example, as that to Mrs. Fry. Of this character were the 'Ode to Rae Wilson,' and some of the pieces given in the *Comic Annual*, pieces of which the comicality was verbal and superficial but of which the underlying seriousness was beyond question. The same blending of qualities was to be shown later in 'Miss Kilmansegg and Her Precious Leg,' where the humorist in working out his droll fancy was ever touching on themes of conduct, or on 'man's inhumanity to man,' in a memorable and searching fashion.

It was in his later years, when he had broken something of new ground in poetry that Hood also wrote some of his most notable imaginative poems, at the head of which perhaps we should put 'The Haunted House,' which Edgar Allan Poe looked upon as Hood's most remarkable contribution to imaginative poetry.

'The Haunted House' we prefer to any composition of its author. It is a masterpiece of its kind; and that kind belongs to a lofty, if not to the loftiest, order of poetical literature. Had we seen this piece before penning our first notice of Hood, we should have had much hesitation in speaking of Fancy and Fantasy as his predominant features. At all events we should have given him credit for much more of true imagination than we did. Not the least merit of the work is its rigorous simplicity. There is no narrative and no doggerel philosophy. The whole subject is the description of a deserted house which the popular superstition considers haunted. The thesis is one of the truest in all poetry. As a mere thesis it is really difficult to conceive anything better. The strength of the poet is put forth in the invention of traits in keeping with the ideas of crime, abandonment, and ghostly visitation. Every legitimate art is brought into aid in conveying the intended effects; and (what is quite remarkable in the case of Hood) nothing discordant is at any point introduced. He has here very little of what we have designated as the fantastic, little which is not strictly harmonious. The metre and rhythm are not only in themselves admirably adapted to the whole design, but, with a true artistic feeling, the poet has preserved a thorough monotone throughout, and renders its effect

more impressive by the repetition (gradually increasing in frequency towards the finale) of one of the most pregnant and effective of the stanzas :

‘O’er all, there hung a shadow and a fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted !’

Had Hood only written ‘The Haunted House’ it would have sufficed to render him immortal.

Something of the same quality but of less remarkable excellence, of a more fanciful character, is to be found in ‘The Elm Tree.’

As a serious poet—despite the championship of Poe—it was long before Hood came to be properly recognized at his proper worth. He had to suffer the common fate of the man who is able to do two things well. The reading public of his day fastened on that portion of his work which was most ticklesome, and that which at the same time most markedly differentiated him from his poetical compeers. Several poets could write serious odes and sonnets and narratives, but there was no other who could write in Hood’s peculiar vein of verbal witticism, nobody else who had raised the pun from disgrace to honour. How supreme Hood was in his mastery of this discredited trick, habit, art, call it what we may, can only be properly appreciated by those who have looked through the works of his imitators—of whom his success in this line brought forth many. We may like a good pun, or we may loathe a pun without admitting the possibility of its being good, but we cannot fail to see how immeasurably superior in its use is Hood to those who without his genius essayed to follow in his footsteps. It is only gradually that his serious poetry has come to be widely recognized as also among the best in its kind. After the period of Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, and others, Thomas Hood is the chief poetic name until we reach the period when Tennyson and Browning were winning

recognition. In actual production, of course, these periods overlap, for there is very rarely an interregnum in the kingdom of poetry.

III

The division of Thomas Hood's poems into 'Serious' and 'Comic' is one that was started shortly after his death, and has been mostly honoured since, but it is on the whole an unsatisfactory one owing to the number of poems which, as has been said, defy classification in either of these categories. Many of his pieces are of the comic all compact, and some of these have been among the most popular; notably such punning ballads as 'Faithless Sally Brown,' 'Faithless Nelly Gray,' 'Tim Turpin,' and many more. Other pieces, though inspired by a love of fun, have so much in them of imaginative power that they may almost rank as true poetry—as though in the author's despite. Of such is that remarkable series—'The Fall,' 'The Demon-Ship,' 'The Desert-Born'—in which the author has imagined some theme of tragic intensity, described it with grim power only to awaken irresistible laughter by the closing anticlimax. It is, however, by his puns that Hood is primarily regarded as a comic writer, but he was also a humorist—one who, as a friend of his put it, 'touched alike the springs of laughter and the source of tears.' In his management of the pun he stands alone; even those pieces which seem to have been written round themes merely because of the punning facility they offered are marked by a felicity of expression that is in the circumstances little short of astounding, while in others the pun seems to fall pat with a sense of inevitability, for there are many lines that may be read with pleasure without the mind being even conscious of the pun, so aptly fall the words, so accidental seems the double meaning. To condemn many of his puns—aglow as they are with imagination and humour—merely because they are puns is, as Canon Ainger happily put it, to be the slave of a definition. But

though Hood was a punster—indeed he may be looked upon as *the* punster, for he almost exhausted the possibilities of the English language in this direction—he was as comic poet not a punster only, he was a humorist, and he was a wit, though the more cutting qualities of wit are less plentiful in his works than the radiant atmosphere of humour. Yet when he came to attacking that which seemed to him to be cant, when retaliating on the intolerant, when dealing with ‘poor pretence’ in any form, then he proved himself well able to make use of wit’s armoury. It is unnecessary to cite examples either of the wit or the humour in this introduction to a volume in which those qualities will be found abundantly evident.

There are still other sides to Hood’s work as comic poet, notably his *vers de société*, his occasional verse—of which Locker-Lampson cited several examples in the *Lyra Elegantiarum*—and his farcical narratives and descriptions, such as ‘Our Village,’ ‘The Green Man,’ ‘The Flying Visit,’ and ‘The Lost Heir.’ To each and all of these, with varied themes he adopted the most varied measures—now the eight syllabled couplet popular with poet-wits of the eighteenth century, now the Spenserian stanza to new ends, and now devising a measure to suit his subject, but always touching it with a neatness of manner, a happiness of phrasing, an ease of versification, and an unexpectedness of allusion combined in a delightful fashion. He stands far ahead of all competitors as the comic poet of the nineteenth-century English literature, and it would perhaps be necessary to go to the American poets to find even a distant second to him—in the person of Oliver Wendell Holmes.

IV

It was near the end of his short life—he had not quite completed his forty-sixth year at the time of his death—that Hood struck something of a new poetic vein when he achieved a sudden world-wide reputation with ‘The Song of the Shirt.’ He may in a sense be looked upon

as belonging to the same literary school as that which gave us Charles Dickens in fiction, and other writers with a purpose of the period when Reform had set men wondering over all manner of social matters that called for reformation. More than a dozen years before Dickens began his purposeful novels Hood had struck the note when he pointed out that it was not enough for philanthropists to take their good efforts into the prisons, they should work on their materials before the prison was reached. So it was something of the same spirit which informed this later work which electrified the people when in the Christmas number of *Punch* for 1843, there were first given to the world 'The Song of the Shirt' and 'The Pauper's Christmas Carol.'

The poet, sure of himself, had acquired the instinctive art of expressing himself with something of a forceful simplicity which should touch the hearts of all readers. No one but Hood could have written 'The Song of the Shirt' it has been declared by a critic who, while admitting its wonderful merit, denied it the name of poem. There is here again no need for us to be slaves of a definition, the verses touched the heart and conscience of the nation in a way that no others have done before or since; and they are interesting not only on account of their power but also as being the first essay in a style which the poet was making peculiarly his own—'The Lay of the Labourer,' 'The Workhouse Clock,' 'The Lady's Dream,' and, from the poetical point of view, by far the greatest of them all, 'The Bridge of Sighs' were all expressions of this new manifestation of the poet's genius, a manifestation cut short almost at its commencement by his fatal illness.

WALTER JERROLD.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	v
The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies	1
Hero and Leander.	32
Lycus, the Centaur	55
The Two Peacocks of Bedfont	67
A Retrospective Review	73
Fair Ines	76
Ode: Autumn	77
Ballad	79
To a Cold Beauty	79
Ruth	80
The Sea of Death. A Fragment	81
Ballad	82
I Remember, I Remember	83
To an Absentee	84
Song	84
Ode to the Moon	85
To ———	87
The Forsaken	88
Ode to Melancholy	88
Sonnets :	
To my Dear Marianne	92
Written in a Volume of Shakespeare	92
To Fancy	92
To an Enthusiast	93

Sonnets (<i>continued</i>):	PAGE
'It is not death, that sometime in a sigh' . . .	93
'By ev'ry sweet tradition of true hearts' . . .	94
On Receiving a Gift	94
'The curse of Adam, the old curse of all' . . .	94
Silence	95
Midnight	95
On a Sleeping Child ; I, II	96
To Ocean	97
'Think, sweetest, if my lids are not now wet' . .	97
False Poets and True	98
'Love, I am jealous of a worthless man' . . .	98
'Love, see thy lover humbled at thy feet' . . .	98
Lear	99
'My heart is sick with longing, tho' I feed' . .	99
Lines on seeing my Wife and Child sleeping in the same Chamber	100
Stanzas	100
Song : 'There is dew for the flow'ret'	101
[In Memoriam]	101
The Dream of Eugene Aram, the Murderer . . .	101
The Last Man	107
Queen Mab	114
The Streamlet	115
To my Daughter on her Birthday	115
Birthday Verses	116
To *****	116
Serenade	118
The Lee Shore	118
To Hope	119
Ode on a Distant Prospect of Clapham Academy .	121
Flowers	124
I love thee	125
Ballad	126
The Death-Bed	127
Anticipation	127

CONTENTS

xvii

	PAGE
To a Child embracing his Mother	128
The Elm Tree	129
The Haunted House	143
The Song of the Shirt	153
The Pauper's Christmas Carol.	156
The Lady's Dream	158
The Assistant Drapers' Petition	161
A Drop of Gin	162
The Workhouse Clock	164
The Bridge of Sighs	167
The Lay of the Labourer	170
Stanzas	173
Ode to Rae Wilson, Esq.	173
Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg	187
A Tale of a Trumpet	253
The Demon-Ship	275
The Fall	279
The Desert-Born	280
The Irish Schoolmaster	290
Song	298
The Two Swans	298
Ode to Mr. Graham, the Aeronaut	306
A <i>Friendly</i> Address to Mrs. Fry in Newgate	313
An Address to the Steam Washing Company	317
Ode to Captain Parry	325
Ode to W. Kitchener, M.D.	330
Ode to Admiral Lord Gambier, G.C.B.	335
Ode to Sir Andrew Agnew, Bart.	337
Ode to Doctor Hahnemann, the Homœopathist	340
The Epping Hunt	344
Faithless Sally Brown	358
Faithless Nelly Gray	360
A Waterloo Ballad	362
Mary's Ghost	365
Tim Turpin	366

	PAGE
John Trot	369
The Poacher.	371
Ben Bluff	373
Lieutenant Luff	375
Pompey's Ghost	377
The Mermaid of Margate	381
Death's Ramble	384
Jack Hall	386
Moral Reflections on the Cross of St. Paul's	393
' Please to Ring the Belle '	395
December and May	395
The Stag-eyed Lady. A Moorish Tale	396
A Sailor's Apology for Bow-legs	401
The Wee Man	403
A Report from Below	405
A Nocturnal Sketch	408
Domestic Asides ; or, Truth in Parentheses	409
The Lost Heir	410
The Drowning Ducks	414
Sally Simpkin's Lament	417
A Singular Exhibition at Somerset House	418
The Double Knock	421
Lines to Mary	422
Our Village.—By a Villager	424
The Carelesse Nurse Mayde	427
The Duel	427
The Boy at the Nore	429
The Supper Superstition	431
A Storm at Hastings and the Little Unknown	433
Lines to a Lady on her Departure for India	440
Pain in a Pleasure-boat	441
Literary and Literal	444
Cockle v. Cackle	448
My Son and Heir	452
No !	455

CONTENTS

xix

	PAGE
A Custom-House Breeze	455
Etching Moralised.	457
Spring	464
Ode: imitated from Horace	465
On a Picture of Hero and Leander	468
For the Fourteenth of February	468
A Bunch of Forget-me-nots	469
Jarvis and Mrs. Cope	470
The China-Mender	472
A Charity Sermon.	476
Hymeneal Retrospections :	
1. ' O Kate ! my dear Partner '	478
2. ' The sun was slumbering in the West '	479
A Parental Ode to my Son, aged Three Years and Five Months	480
A Serenade	481
The Dead Robbery	483
A Rise at the Father of Angling	488
Morning Meditations	492
The Doctor	493
The Green Man	495
The Key. A Moorish Romance	501
The Captain's Cow	505
The Sausage-maker's Ghost	509
Epigrams :	
' After such years of dissension and strife '	511
To Minerva. From the Greek	512
On the Arrangement of the Statues in Trafalgar Square	512
On the Death of the Giraffe	512
INDEX OF FIRST LINES	513

POEMS

THE PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

'Twas in that mellow season of the year,
When the hot Sun sings the yellow leaves
Till they be gold,—and with a broader sphere
The Moon looks down on Ceres and her sheaves;
When more abundantly the spider weaves,
And the cold wind breathes from a chillier clime;
That forth I fared, on one of those still eves,
Touch'd with the dewy sadness of the time,
To think how the bright months had spent their prime.

So that, wherever I address'd my way,
I seem'd to track the melancholy feet
Of him that is the Father of Decay,
And spoils at once the sour weed and the sweet;—
Wherefore regretfully I made retreat
To some unwasted regions of my brain,
Charm'd with the light of summer and the heat,
And bade that bounteous season bloom again,
And sprout fresh flowers in mine own domain.

It was a shady and sequester'd scene,
Like those famed gardens of Boccaccio,
Planted with his own laurels evergreen,
And roses that for endless summer blow;
And there were founting springs to overflow
Their marble basins,—and cool green arcades
Of tall o'erarching sycamores, to throw
Athwart the dappled path their dancing shades,—
With timid coney cropping the green blades.

2 PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

And there were crystal pools, peopled with fish,
Argent and gold; and some of Tyrian skin,
Some crimson-barr'd;—and ever at a wish
They rose obsequious till the wave grew thin
As glass upon their backs, and then dived in,
Quenching their ardent scales in watery gloom;
Whilst others with fresh hues row'd forth to win
My changeable regard,—for so we doom
Things born of thought to vanish or to bloom.

And there were many birds of many dyes,
From tree to tree still faring to and fro,
And stately peacocks with their splendid eyes,
And gorgeous pheasants with their golden glow,
Like Iris just bedabbled in her bow,
Besides some vocalists, without a name,
That oft on fairy errands come and go,
With accents magical;—and all were tame,
And peckled at my hand where'er I came.

And for my sylvan company, in lieu
Of Pampinea with her lively peers,
Sat Queen Titania with her pretty crew,
All in their liveries quaint, with elfin gears,
For she was gracious to my childish years,
And made me free of her enchanted round;
Wherefore this dreamy scene she still endears,
And plants her court upon a verdant mound,
Fenced with umbrageous woods and groves profound.

'Ah me,' she cries, 'was ever moonlight seen
So clear and tender for our midnight trips?
Go some one forth, and with a trump convene
My lieges all!'—Away the goblin skips
A pace or two apart, and deftly strips
The ruddy skin from a sweet rose's cheek,
Then blows the shuddering leaf between his lips,
Making it utter forth a shrill small shriek,
Like a fray'd bird in the grey owlet's beak.

And lo ! upon my fix'd delighted ken
 Appear'd the loyal Fays.—Some by degrees
 Crept from the primrose buds that open'd then,
 And some from bell-shap'd blossoms like the bees,
 Some from the dewy meads, and rushy leas,
 Flew up like chafers when the rustics pass ;
 Some from the rivers, others from tall trees
 Dropp'd, like shed blossoms, silent to the grass,
 Spirits and elfins small, of every class.

Peri and Pixy, and quaint Puck the Antic,
 Brought Robin Goodfellow, that merry swain ;
 And stealthy Mab, queen of old realms romantic,
 Came too, from distance, in her tiny wain,
 Fresh dripping from a cloud—some bloomy rain,
 Then circling the bright Moon, had washed her car,
 And still bedew'd it with a various stain :
 Lastly came Ariel, shooting from a star,
 Who bears all fairy embassies afar.

But Oberon, that night elsewhere exiled,
 Was absent, whether some distemper'd spleen
 Kept him and his fair mate unreconciled,
 Or warfare with the Gnome (whose race had been
 Sometime obnoxious), kept him from his queen,
 And made her now peruse the starry skies
 Prophetical with such an absent mien ;
 Howbeit, the tears stole often to her eyes,
 And oft the Moon was incensed with her sighs—

Which made the elves sport drearily, and soon
 Their hushing dances languish'd to a stand,
 Like midnight leaves when, as the Zephyrs swoon,
 All on their drooping stems they sink unfann'd,—
 So into silence droop'd the fairy band,
 To see their empress dear so pale and still,
 Crowding her softly round on either hand,
 As pale as frosty snow-drops, and as chill,
 To whom the sceptred dame reveals her ill.

4 PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

'Alas,' quoth she, 'ye know our fairy lives
Are leased upon the fickle faith of men;
Not measured out against fate's mortal knives,
Like human gossamers, we perish when
We fade, and are forgot in worldly ken,—
Though poesy has thus prolong'd our date,
Thanks be to the sweet Bard's auspicious pen
That rescued us so long!—howbeit of late
I feel some dark misgivings of our fate.

'And this dull day my melancholy sleep
Hath been so throng'd with images of woe,
That even now I cannot choose but weep
To think this was some sad prophetic show
Of future horror to befall us so,—
Of mortal wreck and uttermost distress,—
Yea, our poor empire's fall and overthrow,—
For this was my long vision's dreadful stress,
And when I waked my trouble was not less.

'Whenever to the clouds I tried to seek,
Such leaden weight dragg'd these Icarian wings,
My faithless wand was wavering and weak,
And slimy toads had trespass'd in our rings—
The birds refused to sing for me—all things
Disown'd their old allegiance to our spells;
The rude bees prick'd me with their rebel stings;
And, when I pass'd, the valley-lily's bells
Rang out, methought, most melancholy knells.

'And ever on the faint and flagging air
A doleful spirit with a dreary note
Cried in my fearful ear, "Prepare! prepare!"
Which soon I knew came from a raven's throat,
Perch'd on a cypress bough not far remote,—
A cursed bird, too crafty to be shot,
That alway cometh with his soot-black coat
To make hearts dreary:—for he is a blot
Upon the book of life, as well ye wot!—

'Wherefore some while I bribed him to be mute,
 With bitter acorns stuffing his foul maw,
 Which barely I appeased, when some fresh bruit
 Startled me all aheap!—and soon I saw
 The horridest shape that ever raised my awe,—
 A monstrous giant, very huge and tall,
 Such as in elder times, devoid of law,
 With wicked might grieved the primeval ball,
 And this was sure the deadliest of them all!

'Gaunt was he as a wolf of Languedoc,
 With bloody jaws, and frost upon his crown;
 So from his barren poll one hoary lock
 Over his wrinkled front fell far adown,
 Well nigh to where his frosty brows did frown
 Like jagged icicles at cottage eaves;
 And for his coronal he wore some brown
 And bristled ears gather'd from Ceres' sheaves,
 Entwined with certain sere and russet leaves.

'And lo! upon a mast rear'd far aloft,
 He bore a very bright and crescent blade,
 The which he waved so dreadfully, and oft,
 In meditative spite, that, sore dismay'd,
 I crept into an acorn-cup for shade;
 Meanwhile the horrid effigy went by:
 I trow his look was dreadful, for it made
 The trembling birds betake them to the sky,
 For every leaf was lifted by his sigh.

'And ever as he sigh'd, his foggy breath
 Blurr'd out the landscape like a flight of smoke;
 Thence knew I this was either dreary Death
 Or Time, who leads all creatures to his stroke.
 Ah wretched me!—Here, even as she spoke,
 The melancholy Shape came gliding in,
 And lean'd his back against an antique oak,
 Folding his wings, that were so fine and thin,
 They scarce were seen against the Dryad's skin.

6 PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

Then what a fear seized all the little rout !
Look how a flock of panick'd sheep will stare—
And huddle close—and start—and wheel about,
Watching the roaming mongrel here and there,—
So did that sudden Apparition scare
All close aheap those small affrighted things ;
Nor sought they now the safety of the air,
As if some leaden spell withheld their wings ;
But who can fly that ancientest of Kings ?

Whom now the Queen, with a forestalling tear
And previous sigh, beginneth to entreat,
Bidding him spare, for love, her lieges dear :
' Alas ! ' quoth she, ' is there no nodding wheat
Ripe for thy crooked weapon, and more meet,—
Or wither'd leaves to ravish from the tree,—
Or crumbling battlements for thy defeat ?
Think but what vaunting monuments there be
Boulded in spite and mockery of thee.

' O fret away the fabric walls of Fame,
And grind down marble Cæsars with the dust :
Make tombs inscriptionless—raze each high name,
And waste old armours of renown with rust :
Do all of this, and thy revenge is just :
Make such decays the trophies of thy prime,
And check Ambition's overweening lust,
That dares exterminating war with Time,—
But we are guiltless of that lofty crime.

' Frail feeble sprites !—the children of a dream !
Leased on the sufferance of fickle men,
Like motes dependent on the sunny beam,
Living but in the sun's indulgent ken,
And when that light withdraws, withdrawing then ;—
So do we flutter in the glance of youth
And fervid fancy,—and so perish when
The eye of faith grows aged ;—in sad truth,
Feeling thy sway, O Time ! though not thy tooth !

'Where be those old divinities forlorn,
 That dwelt in trees, or haunted in a stream?
 Alas! their memories are dimm'd and torn,
 Like the remainder tatters of a dream:
 So will it fare with our poor thrones, I deem;—
 For us the same dark trench Oblivion delves,
 That holds the wastes of every human scheme.
 O spare us then,—and these our pretty elves,
 We soon, alas! shall perish of ourselves!'

Now as she ended, with a sigh, to name
 Those old Olympians, scatter'd by the whirl
 Of fortune's giddy wheel and brought to shame,
 Methought a scornful and malignant curl
 Show'd on the lips of that malicious churl,
 To think what noble havocks he had made;
 So that I fear'd he all at once would hurl
 The harmless fairies into endless shade,—
 Howbeit he stopp'd awhile to whet his blade.

Pity it was to hear the elfins' wail,
 Rise up in concert from their mingled dread;
 Pity it was to see them, all so pale,
 Gaze on the grass as for a dying bed;—
 But Puck was seated on a spider's thread,
 That hung between two branches of a briar,
 And 'gan to swing and gambol heels o'er head,
 Like any Southwark tumbler on a wire,
 For him no present grief could long inspire.

Meanwhile the Queen with many piteous drops,
 Falling like tiny sparks full fast and free,
 Bedews a pathway from her throne;—and stops
 Before the foot of her arch enemy,
 And with her little arms enfolds his knee,
 That shows more gristly from that fair embrace;
 But she will ne'er depart. 'Alas!' quoth she,
 'My painful fingers I will here enlace
 Till I have gain'd your pity for our race.

8 PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

‘What have we ever done to earn this grudge,
And hate—(if not too humble for thy hating?)—
Look o’er our labours and our lives, and judge
If there be any ills of our creating;
For we are very kindly creatures, dating
With nature’s charities still sweet and bland:—
O think this murder worthy of debating!’—
Herewith she makes a signal with her hand,
To beckon some one from the Fairy band.

Anon I saw one of those elfin things,
Clad all in white like any chorister,
Come fluttering forth on his melodious wings,
That made soft music at each little stir,
But something louder than a bee’s demur
Before he lights upon a bunch of broom,
And thus ’gan he with Saturn to confer,—
And O his voice was sweet, touch’d with the gloom
Of that sad theme that argued of his doom!

Quoth he, ‘We make all melodies our care,
That no false discords may offend the Sun,
Music’s great master—tuning every where
All pastoral sounds and melodies, each one
Duly to place and season, so that none
May harshly interfere. We rouse at morn
The shrill sweet lark; and when the day is done,
Hush silent pauses for the bird forlorn,
That singeth with her breast against a thorn.

‘We gather in loud choirs the twittering race,
That make a chorus with their single note;
And tend on new-fledged birds in every place,
That duly they may get their tunes by rote;
And oft, like echoes, answering remote,
We hide in thickets from the feather’d throng,
And strain in rivalry each throbbing throat,
Singing in shrill responses all day long,
Whilst the glad truant listens to our song.

'Wherefore, great King of Years, as thou dost love
 The raining music from a morning cloud,
 When vanish'd larks are carolling above,
 To wake Apollo with their pipings loud ;—
 If ever thou hast heard in leafy shroud
 The sweet and plaintive Sappho of the dell,
 Show thy sweet mercy on this little crowd,
 And we will muffle up the sheepfold bell
 Whene'er thou listenest to Philomel.'

Then Saturn thus :—' Sweet is the merry lark,
 That carols in man's ear so clear and strong ;
 And youth must love to listen in the dark
 That tuneful elegy of Tereus' wrong ;
 But I have heard that ancient strain too long,
 For sweet is sweet but when a little strange,
 And I grow weary for some newer song ;
 For wherefore had I wings, unless to range
 Through all things mutable from change to change ?

' But wouldst thou hear the melodies of Time,
 Listen when sleep and drowsy darkness roll
 Over hush'd cities, and the midnight chime
 Sounds from their hundred clocks, and deep bells toll
 Like a last knell over the dead world's soul,
 Saying, Time shall be final of all things,
 Whose late, last voice must elegise the whole,—
 O then I clap aloft my brave broad wings,
 And make the wide air tremble while it rings !'

Then next a fair Eve-Fay made meek address,
 Saying, ' We be the handmaids of the Spring,
 In sign whereof, May, the quaint broideress,
 Hath wrought her samplers on our gauzy wing.
 We tend upon buds' birth and blossoming,
 And count the leafy tributes that they owe—
 As, so much to the earth—so much to fling
 In showers to the brook—so much to go
 In whirlwinds to the clouds that made them grow.

10 PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

'The pastoral cowslips are our little pets,
And daisy stars, whose firmament is green;
Pansies, and those veil'd nuns, meek violets,
Sighing to that warm world from which they screen;
And golden daffodils, pluck'd for May's Queen;
And lonely harebells, quaking on the heath;
And Hyacinth, long since a fair youth seen,
Whose tuneful voice, turn'd fragrance in his breath,
Kiss'd by sad Zephyr, guilty of his death.

'The widow'd primrose weeping to the moon,
And saffron crocus in whose chalice bright
A cool libation hoarded for the noon
Is kept—and she that purifies the light,
The virgin lily, faithful to her white,
Whereon Eve wept in Eden for her shame;
And the most dainty rose, Aurora's spright,
Our every godchild, by whatever name—
Spare us our lives, for we did nurse the same!'

Then that old Mower stamp'd his heel, and struck
His hurtful scythe against the harmless ground,
Saying, 'Ye foolish imps, when am I stuck
With gaudy buds, or like a wooer crown'd
With flow'ry chaplets, save when they are found
Wither'd?—Whenever have I pluck'd a rose,
Except to scatter its vain leaves around?
For so all gloss of beauty I oppose,
And bring decay on every flow'r that blows.

'Or when am I so wroth as when I view
The wanton pride of Summer;—how she decks
The birth-day world with blossoms ever new,
As if Time had not lived, and heap'd great wrecks
Of years on years?—O then I bravely vex
And catch the gay Months in their gaudy plight,
And slay them with the wreaths about their necks,
Like foolish heifers in the holy rite,
And raise great trophies to my ancient might.'

Then saith another, 'We are kindly things,
 And like her offspring nestle with the dove,—
 Witness these hearts embroider'd on our wings,
 To show our constant patronage of love:—
 We sit at even, in sweet bow'rs above
 Lovers, and shake rich odours on the air,
 To mingle with their sighs; and still remove
 The startling owl, and bid the bat forbear
 Their privacy, and haunt some other where.

'And we are near the mother when she sits
 Beside her infant in its wicker bed;
 And we are in the fairy scene that flits
 Across its tender brain: sweet dreams we shed,
 And whilst the tender little soul is fled
 Away, to sport with our young elves, the while
 We touch the dimpled cheek with roses red,
 And tickle the soft lips until they smile,
 So that their careful parents they beguile.

'O then, if ever thou hast breathed a vow
 At Love's dear portal, or at pale moon-rise
 Crush'd the dear curl on a regardful brow
 That did not frown thee from thy honey prize—
 If ever thy sweet son sat on thy thighs,
 And wooed thee from thy careful thoughts within
 To watch the harmless beauty of his eyes,
 Or glad thy fingers on his smooth soft skin,
 For Love's dear sake, let us thy pity win!'

Then Saturn fiercely thus:—'What joy have I
 In tender babes, that have devour'd mine own,
 Whenever to the light I heard them cry,
 Till foolish Rhea cheated me with stone?
 Whereon, till now, is my great hunger shown,
 In monstrous dints of my enormous tooth;
 And,—but the peopled world is too full grown
 For hunger's edge,—I would consume all youth
 At one great meal, without delay or ruth!

12 PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

'For I am well nigh craz'd and wild to hear
How boastful fathers taunt me with their breed,
Saying, We shall not die nor disappear,
But in these other selves, ourselves succeed,
Ev'n as ripe flowers pass into their seed
Only to be renew'd from prime to prime,
All of which boastings I am forced to read,
Besides a thousand challenges to Time
Which bragging lovers have compil'd in rhyme.

'Wherefore, when they are sweetly met o' nights,
There will I steal, and with my hurried hand
Startle them suddenly from their delights
Before the next encounter hath been plann'd,
Ravishing hours in little minutes spann'd;
But when they say farewell, and grieve apart,
Then like a leaden statue I will stand,
Meanwhile their many tears encrust my dart,
And with a ragged edge cut heart from heart.'

Then next a merry Woodsman, clad in green,
Stept vanward from his mates, that idly stood
Each at his proper ease, as they had been
Nursed in the liberty of old Shérwood,
And wore the livery of Robin Hood,
Who wont in forest shades to dine and sup,—
So came this chief right frankly, and made good
His haunch against his axe, and thus spoke up,
Doffing his cap, which was an acorn's cup:—

'We be small foresters and gay, who tend
On trees, and all their furniture of green,
Training the young boughs airily to bend,
And show blue snatches of the sky between;—
Or knit more close intricacies, to screen
Birds' crafty dwellings as may hide them best,
But most the timid blackbird's—she, that seen,
Will bear black poisonous berries to her nest,
Lest man should cage the darlings of her breast.

'We bend each tree in proper attitude,
 And founting willows train in silvery falls;
 We frame all shady roofs and arches rude,
 And verdant aisles leading to Dryads' halls,
 Or deep recesses where the Echo calls;—
 We shape all plummy trees against the sky,
 And carve tall elms' Corinthian capitals,—
 When sometimes, as our tiny hatchets ply,
 Men say the tapping woodpecker is nigh

'Sometimes we scoop the squirrel's hollow cell,
 And sometimes carve quaint letters on trees' rind,
 That haply some lone musing wight may spell
 Dainty Aminta,—Gentle Rosalind,—
 Or chastest Laura,—sweetly call'd to mind
 In sylvan solitudes, ere he lies down;—
 And sometimes we enrich gray stems, with twined
 And vagrant ivy,—or rich moss, whose brown
 Burns into gold as the warm sun goes down.

'And, lastly, for mirth's sake and Christmas cheer,
 We bear the seedling berries, for increase,
 To graft the Druid oaks, from year to year,
 Careful that misletoe may never cease;—
 Wherefore, if thou dost prize the shady peace
 Of sombre forests, or to see light break
 Through sylvan cloisters, and in spring release
 Thy spirit amongst leaves from careful ake,
 Spare us our lives for the Green Dryad's sake.'

Then Saturn, with a frown:—'Go forth, and fell
 Oak for your coffins, and thenceforth lay by
 Your axes for the rust, and bid farewell
 To all sweet birds, and the blue peeps of sky
 Through tangled branches, for ye shall not spy
 The next green generation of the tree:
 But hence with the dead leaves, whene'er they fly,—
 Which in the bleak air I would rather see,
 Than flights of the most tuneful birds that be.

14 PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

'For I dislike all prime and verdant pets,
Ivy except, that on the aged wall
Preys with its worm-like roots, and daily frets,
The crumbled tower it seems to league withal,
King-like, worn down by its own coronal:—
Neither in forest haunts love I to won,
Before the golden plumage 'gins to fall,
And leaves the brown bleak limbs with few leaves on,
Or bare—like Nature in her skeleton.

'For then sit I amongst the crooked boughs,
Wooing dull Memory with kindred sighs;
And there in rustling nuptials we espouse,
Smit by the sadness in each other's eyes;—
But Hope must have green bowers and blue skies,
And must be courted with the gauds of spring;
Whilst Youth leans god-like on her lap, and cries
What shall we always do, but love and sing?—
And Time is reckon'd a discarded thing.'

Here in my dream it made me fret to see
How Puck, the antic, all this dreary while
Had blithely jested with calamity,
With mistim'd mirth mocking the doleful style
Of his sad comrades, till it raised my bile
To see him so reflect their grief aside,
Turning their solemn looks to half a smile—
Like a straight stick shown crooked in the tide;—
But soon a novel advocate I spied.

Quoth he—'We teach all natures to fulfil
Their fore-appointed crafts, and instincts meet,—
The bee's sweet alchemy,—the spider's skill,—
The pismire's care to garner up his wheat,—
And rustic masonry to swallows fleet,—
The lapwing's cunning to preserve her nest,—
But most, that lesser pelican, the sweet
And shrilly ruddock, with its bleeding breast,
Its tender pity of poor babes distress.

'Sometimes we cast our shapes, and in sleek skins
 Delve with the timid mole, that aptly delves
 From our example ; so the spider spins,
 And eke the silk-worm pattern'd by ourselves :
 Sometimes we travail on the summer shelves
 Of early bees, and busy toils commence,
 Watch'd of wise men, that know not we are elves,
 But gaze and marvel at our stretch of sense,
 And praise our human-like intelligence.

'Wherefore, by thy delight in that old tale,
 And plaintive dirges the late robins sing,
 What time the leaves are scatter'd by the gale,
 Mindful of that old forest burying ;—
 As thou dost love to watch each tiny thing,
 For whom our craft most curiously contrives,
 If thou hast caught a bee upon the wing,
 To take his honey-bag,—spare us our lives,
 And we will pay the ransom in full hives.'

'Now by my glass,' quoth Time, 'ye do offend
 In teaching the brown bees that careful lore,
 And frugal ants, whose millions would have end,
 But they lay up for need a timely store,
 And travail with the seasons evermore ;
 Whereas Great Mammoth long hath pass'd away,
 And none but I can tell what hide he wore ;
 Whilst purblind men, the creatures of a day,
 In riddling wonder his great bones survey.'

Then came an elf, right beauteous to behold,
 Whose coat was like a brooklet that the sun
 Hath all embroider'd with its crooked gold,
 It was so quaintly wrought, and overrun
 With spangled tracteries,—most meet for one
 That was a warden of the pearly streams ;—
 And as he stept out of the shadows dun,
 His jewels sparkled in the pale moon's gleams
 And shot into the air their pointed beams.

16 PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

Quoth he,—‘ We bear the cold and silver keys
Of bubbling springs and fountains, that below
Course thro’ the veiny earth,—which when they freeze
Into hard chrysolites, we bid to flow.

Creeping like subtle snakes, when, as they go,
We guide their windings to melodious falls,
At whose soft murmurings, so sweet and low,
Poets have tun’d their smoothest madrigals,
To sing to ladies in their banquet halls.

‘ And when the hot sun with his steadfast heat
Parches the river god,—whose dusty urn
Drips miserly, till soon his crystal feet
Against his pebbly floor wax faint and burn,
And languid fish, unpois’d, grow sick and yearn,—
Then scoop we hollows in some sandy nook,
And little channels dig, wherein we turn
The thread-worn rivulet, that all forsook
The Naiad-lily, pining for her brook.

‘ Wherefore, by thy delight in cool green meads,
With living sapphires daintily inlaid,—
In all soft songs of waters and their reeds,—
And all reflections in a streamlet made,
Haply of thy own love, that, disarray’d,
Kills the fair lily with a livelier white,—
By silver trouts upspringing from green shade,
And winking stars reduplicate at night,
Spare us, poor ministers to such delight.’

Howbeit his pleading and his gentle looks
Mov’d not the spiteful Shade :—Quoth he, ‘ Your taste
Shoots wide of mine, for I despise the brooks
And slavish rivulets that run to waste
In noontide sweats, or, like poor vassals, haste
To swell the vast dominion of the sea,
In whose great presence I am held disgrac’d.
And neighbour’d with a king that rivals me
In ancient might and hoary majesty.

'Whereas I rul'd in Chaos, and still keep
 The awful secrets of that ancient dearth,
 Before the briny fountains of the deep
 Brimm'd up the hollow cavities of earth;—
 I saw each trickling Sea-God at his birth,
 Each pearly Naiad with her oozy locks,
 And infant Titans of enormous girth,
 Whose huge young feet yet stumbled on the rocks,
 Stunning the early world with frequent shocks.

'Where now is Titan, with his cumbrous brood,
 That scar'd the world?—By this sharp scythe they fell,
 And half the sky was curdled with their blood:
 So have all primal giants sigh'd farewell.
 No Wardens now by sedgy fountains dwell,
 No pearly Naiads. All their days are done
 That strove with Time, untimely, to excel;
 Wherefore I raz'd their progenies, and none
 But my great shadow intercepts the sun!'

Then saith the timid Fay—'O, mighty Time!
 Well hast thou wrought the cruel Titans' fall,
 For they were stain'd with many a bloody crime:
 Great giants work great wrongs,—but we are small,
 For love goes lowly;—but Oppression's tall,
 And with surpassing strides goes foremost still
 Where love indeed can hardly reach at all;
 Like a poor dwarf o'erburthen'd with good will,
 That labours to efface the tracks of ill.—

'Man even strives with Man, but we eschew
 The guilty feud, and all fierce strifes abhor;
 Nay, we are gentle as sweet heaven's dew,
 Beside the red and horrid drops of war,
 Weeping the cruel hates men battle for,
 Which worldly bosoms nourish in our spite:
 For in the gentle breast we ne'er withdraw,
 But only when all love hath taken flight,
 And youth's warm gracious heart is harden'd quite.

18 PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

' So are our gentle natures intertwin'd
With sweet humanities, and closely knit
In kindly sympathy with human kind.
Witness how we befriend, with elfin wit,
All hopeless maids and lovers,—nor omit
Magical succours unto hearts forlorn:—
We charm man's life, and do not perish it;—
So judge us by the helps we show'd this morn,
To one who held his wretched days in scorn.

' 'Twas nigh sweet Amwell;—for the Queen had task'd
Our skill to-day amidst the silver Lea,
Whereon the noontide sun had not yet bask'd;
Wherefore some patient man we thought to see,
Planted in moss-grown rushes to the knee,
Beside the cloudy margin cold and dim;
Howbeit no patient fisherman was he
That cast his sudden shadow from the brim,
Making us leave our toils to gaze on him.

' His face was ashy pale, and leaden care
Had sunk the levell'd arches of his brow,
Once bridges for his joyous thoughts to fare
Over those melancholy springs and slow,
That from his piteous eyes began to flow,
And fell anon into the chilly stream;
Which, as his mimic'd image show'd below,
Wrinkled his face with many a needless seam,
Making grief sadder in its own esteem.

' And lo! upon the air we saw him stretch
His passionate arms; and, in a wayward strain,
He 'gan to elegize that fellow wretch
That with mute gestures answer'd him again,
Saying, "Poor slave, how long wilt thou remain
Life's sad weak captive in a prison strong,
Hoping with tears to rust away thy chain,
In bitter servitude to worldly wrong?—
Thou wear'st that mortal livery too long!"

'This, with more spleenful speeches and some tears,
When he had spent upon the imaged wave,
Speedily I conven'd my elfin peers
Under the lily-cups, that we might save
This woeful mortal from a wilful grave
By shrewd diversions of his mind's regret,
Seeing he was mere melancholy's slave,
That sank wherever a dark cloud he met,
And straight was tangled in her secret net.

'Therefore, as still he watch'd the water's flow,
Daintily we transform'd, and with bright fins
Came glancing through the gloom; some from below
Rose like dim fancies when a dream begins,
Snatching the light upon their purple skins;
Then under the broad leaves made slow retire:
One like a golden galley bravely wins
Its radiant course,—another glows like fire,—
Making that wayward man our pranks admire.

'And so he banish'd thought, and quite forgot
All contemplation of that wretched face;
And so we wil'd him from that lonely spot
Along the river's brink; till, by heaven's grace,
He met a gentle haunter of the place,
Full of sweet wisdom gather'd from the brooks,
Who there discuss'd his melancholy case
With wholesome texts learn'd from kind nature's books,
Meanwhile he newly trimm'd his lines and hooks.'

Herewith the Fairy ceased. Quoth Ariel now—
'Let me remember how I sav'd a man,
Whose fatal noose was fasten'd on a bough,
Intended to abridge his sad life's span;
For haply I was by when he began
His stern soliloquy in life's dispraise,
And overheard his melancholy plan,
How he had made a vow to end his days,
And therefore follow'd him in all his ways.

20 PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

' Through brake and tangled copse, for much he loath'd
All populous haunts, and roam'd in forests rude,
To hide himself from man. But I had cloth'd
My delicate limbs with plumes, and still pursued,
Where only foxes and wild cats intrude,
Till we were come beside an ancient tree
Late blasted by a storm. Here he renew'd
His loud complaints,—choosing that spot to be
The scene of his last horrid tragedy.

' It was a wild and melancholy glen,
Made gloomy by tall firs and cypress dark,
Whose roots, like any bones of buried men,
Push'd through the rotten sod for fear's remark :
A hundred horrid stems, jagged and stark,
Wrestled with crooked arms in hideous fray,
Besides sleek ashes with their dappled bark,
Like crafty serpents climbing for a prey,
With many blasted oaks moss-grown and grey.

' But here upon his final desperate clause
Suddenly I pronounc'd so sweet a strain,
Like a pang'd nightingale, it made him pause,
Till half the frenzy of his grief was slain,
The sad remainder oozing from his brain
In timely ecstasies of healing tears,
Which through his ardent eyes began to drain ;—
Meanwhile the deadly Fates unclos'd their shears :—
So pity me and all my fated peers !'

Thus Ariel ended, and was some time hush'd :
When with the hoary shape a fresh tongue pleads,
And red as rose the gentle Fairy blush'd
To read the record of her own good deeds :—
' It chanc'd,' quoth she, ' in seeking through the meads
For honied cowslips, sweetest in the morn,
Whilst yet the buds were hung with dewy beads,
And Echo answer'd to the huntsman's horn,
We found a babe left in the swarths forlorn.

'A little, sorrowful deserted thing,
 Begot of love, and yet no love begetting;
 Guiltless of shame, and yet for shame to wring;
 And too soon banish'd from a mother's petting,
 To churlish nurture and the wide world's fretting,
 For alien pity and unnatural care;—
 Alas! to see how the cold dew kept wetting
 His childish coats, and dabbled all his hair,
 Like gossamers across his forehead fair.

'His pretty pouting mouth, witless of speech,
 Lay half-way open like a rose-lipp'd shell;
 And his young cheek was softer than a peach,
 Whereon his tears, for roundness, could not dwell,
 But quickly roll'd themselves to pearls, and fell,
 Some on the grass, and some against his hand,
 Or haply wander'd to the dimpled well,
 Which love beside his mouth had sweetly plann'd,
 Yet not for tears, but mirth and smilings bland.

'Pity it was to see those frequent tears
 Falling regardless from his friendless eyes;
 There was such beauty in those twin blue spheres,
 As any mother's heart might leap to prize;
 Blue were they, like the zenith of the skies
 Soften'd betwixt two clouds, both clear and mild;—
 Just touch'd with thought, and yet not over wise,
 They show'd the gentle spirit of a child,
 Not yet by care or any craft defil'd.

'Pity it was to see the ardent sun
 Scorching his helpless limbs—it shone so warm;
 For kindly shade or shelter he had none,
 Nor mother's gentle breast, come fair or storm.
 Meanwhile I bade my pitying mates transform
 Like grasshoppers, and then, with shrilly cries,
 All round the infant noisily we swarm,
 Haply some passing rustic to advise—
 Whilst providential Heav'n our care espies,

22 PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

'And sends full soon a tender-hearted hind,
Who, wond'ring at our loud unusual note,
Strays curiously aside, and so doth find
The orphan child laid in the grass remote,
And laps the foundling in his russet coat,
Who thence was nurtur'd in his kindly cot:
But how he prosper'd let proud London quote,
How wise, how rich, and how renown'd he got,
And chief of all her citizens, I wot.

'Witness his goodly vessels on the Thames,
Whose holds were fraught with costly merchandize,—
Jewels from Ind, and pearls for courtly dames,
And gorgeous silks that Samarcand supplies:
Witness that Royal Bourse he bade arise,
The mart of merchants from the East and West;
Whose slender summit, pointing to the skies,
Still bears, in token of his grateful breast,
The tender grasshopper, his chosen crest—

'The tender grasshopper, his chosen crest,
That all the summer, with a tuneful wing,
Makes merry chirpings in its grassy nest,
Inspired with dew to leap and sing:—
So let us also live, eternal King!
Partakers of the green and pleasant earth:—
Pity it is to slay the meanest thing,
That, like a mote, shines in the smile of mirth:—
Enough there is of joy's decrease and dearth!

'Enough of pleasure, and delight, and beauty,
Perish'd and gone, and hasting to decay;—
Enough to sadden even thee, whose duty
Or spite it is to havoc and to slay:
Too many a lovely race raz'd quite away,
Hath left large gaps in life and human loving:—
Here then begin thy cruel war to stay,
And spare fresh sighs, and tears, and groans, reproving
Thy desolating hand for our removing.'

Now here I heard a shrill and sudden cry,
 And, looking up, I saw the antic Puck
 Grappling with Time, who clutch'd him like a fly
 Victim of his own sport,—the jester's luck !
 He, whilst his fellows griev'd, poor wight, had stuck
 His freakish gauds upon the Ancient's brow,
 And now his ear, and now his beard, would pluck ;
 Whereas the angry churl had snatch'd him now,
 Crying, 'Thou impish mischief, who art thou ?'

'Alas !' quoth Puck, 'a little random elf,
 Born in the sport of nature, like a weed,
 For simple sweet enjoyment of myself,
 But for no other purpose, worth, or need ;
 And yet withal of a most happy breed ;—
 And there is Robin Goodfellow besides,
 My partner dear in many a prankish deed
 To make dame laughter hold her jolly sides,
 Like merry mummers twain on holy tides.

' 'Tis we that bob the angler's idle cork,
 Till e'en the patient man breathes half a curse ;
 We steal the morsel from the gossip's fork,
 And curdling looks with secret straws disperse,
 Or stop the sneezing chanter at mid verse :
 And when an infant's beauty prospers ill,
 We change, some mothers say, the child at nurse ;
 But any graver purpose to fulfil,
 We have not wit enough, and scarce the will.

'We never let the canker melancholy
 To gather on our faces like a rust,
 But gloss our features with some change of folly,
 Taking life's fabled miseries on trust,
 But only sorrowing when sorrow must :
 We ruminate no sage's solemn cud,
 But own ourselves a pinch of lively dust
 To frisk upon a wind,—whereas the flood
 Of tears would turn us into heavy mud.

‘ Beshrew those sad interpreters of nature,
 Who gloze her lively universal law,
 As if she had not formed our cheerful feature
 To be so tickled with the slightest straw !
 So let them vex their mumping mouths, and draw
 The corners downward, like a wat’ry moon,
 And deal in gusty sighs and rainy flaw—
 We will not woo foul weather all too soon,
 Or nurse November on the lap of June.

‘ For ours are winging sprites, like any bird,
 That shun all stagnant settlements of grief ;
 And even in our rest our hearts are stirr’d,
 Like insects settled on a dancing leaf :—
 This is our small philosophy in brief,
 Which thus to teach hath set me all agape :
 But dost thou relish it ? O hoary chief !
 Unclasp thy crooked fingers from my nape,
 And I will show thee many a pleasant scrape.’

Then Saturn thus :—shaking his crooked blade
 O’erhead, which made aloft a lightning flash
 In all the fairies’ eyes, dismally fray’d !
 His ensuing voice came like the thunder crash—
 Meanwhile the bolt shatters some pine or ash—
 ‘ Thou feeble, wanton, foolish, fickle thing !
 Whom nought can frighten, sadden, or abash,—
 To hope my solemn countenance to wring
 To idiot smiles !—but I will prune thy wing !

‘ Lo ! this most awful handle of my scythe
 Stood once a May-pole, with a flowery crown,
 Which rustics danced around, and maidens blithe,
 To wanton pipings ;—but I pluck’d it down,
 And robed the May Queen in a churchyard gown,
 Turning her buds to rosemary and rue ;
 And all their merry minstrelsy did drown,
 And laid each lusty leaper in the dew ;—
 So thou shalt fare—and every jovial crew !’

Here he lets go the struggling imp, to clutch
 His mortal engine with each grisly hand,
 Which frights the elfin progeny so much,
 They huddle in a heap, and trembling stand
 All round Titania, like the queen bee's band,
 With sighs and tears and very shrieks of woe!—
 Meanwhile, some moving argument I plann'd,
 To make the stern Shade merciful,—when lo!
 He drops his fatal scythe without a blow!

For, just at need, a timely Apparition
 Steps in between, to bear the awful brunt;
 Making him change his horrible position,
 To marvel at this comer, brave and blunt,
 That dares Time's irresistible affront,
 Whose strokes have scarr'd even the gods of old;—
 Whereas this seem'd a mortal, at mere hunt
 For coneys, lighted by the moonshine cold,
 Or stalker of stray deer, stealthy and bold.

Who, turning to the small assembled fays,
 Doffs to the lily queen his courteous cap,
 And holds her beauty for a while in gaze,
 With bright eyes kindling at this pleasant hap;
 And thence upon the fair moon's silver map,
 As if in question of this magic chance,
 Laid like a dream upon the green earth's lap;
 And then upon old Saturn turns askance,
 Exclaiming, with a glad and kindly glance:—

'Oh these be Fancy's revellers by night!
 Stealthy companions of the downy moth—
 Diana's motes, that flit in her pale light,
 Shunners of sunbeams in diurnal sloth;—
 These be the feasters on night's silver cloth,—
 The gnat with shrilly trump is their convener,
 Forth from their flowery chambers, nothing loth,
 With lulling tunes to charm the air serener,
 Or dance upon the grass to make it greener.

‘These be the pretty genii of the flow’rs,
 Daintily fed with honey and pure dew—
 Midsummer’s phantoms in her dreaming hours,
 King Oberon, and all his merry crew,
 The darling puppets of romance’s view ;
 Fairies, and sprites, and goblin elves we call them,
 Famous for patronage of lovers true ;—
 Nor harm they act, neither shall harm befall them,
 So do not thus with crabbed frowns appal them.’

O what a cry was Saturn’s then !—it made
 The fairies quake. ‘What care I for their pranks,
 However they may lovers choose to aid,
 Or dance their roundelays on flow’ry banks ?—
 Long must they dance before they earn my thanks,—
 So step aside, to some far safer spot,
 Whilst with my hungry scythe I mow their ranks,
 And leave them in the sun, like weeds, to rot,
 And with the next day’s sun to be forgot.’

Anon, he raised afresh his weapon keen ;
 But still the gracious Shade disarm’d his aim,
 Stepping with brave alacrity between,
 And made his sere arm powerless and tame.
 His be perpetual glory, for the shame
 Of hoary Saturn in that grand defeat !—
 But I must tell, how here Titania came
 With all her kneeling lieges, to entreat
 His kindly succour, in sad tones, but sweet.

Saying, ‘Thou seest a wretched queen before thee,
 The fading power of a failing land,
 Who for her kingdom kneeleth to implore thee,
 Now menac’d by this tyrant’s spoiling hand ;
 No one but thee can hopefully withstand
 That crooked blade, he longeth so to lift.
 I pray thee blind him with his own vile sand,
 Which only times all ruins by its drift,
 Or prune his eagle wings that are so swift.

' Or take him by that sole and grizzled tuft,
 That hangs upon his bald and barren crown ;
 And we will sing to see him so rebuff'd,
 And lend our little mights to pull him down,
 And make brave sport of his malicious frown,
 For all his boastful mockery o'er men ;
 For thou wast born I know for this renown,
 By my most magical and inward ken,
 That readeth ev'n at Fate's forestalling pen.

' Nay, by the golden lustre of thine eye,
 And by thy brow's most fair and ample span,
 Thought's glorious palace, fram'd for fancies high,
 And by thy cheek thus passionately wan,
 I know the signs of an immortal man,—
 Nature's chief darling, and illustrious mate,
 Destin'd to foil old Death's oblivious plan,
 And shine untarnish'd by the fogs of Fate,
 Time's famous rival till the final date !

' O shield us then from this usurping Time,
 And we will visit thee in moonlight dreams ;
 And teach thee tunes, to wed unto thy rhyme,
 And dance about thee in all midnight gleams.
 Giving thee glimpses of our magic schemes,
 Such as no mortal's eye hath ever seen ;
 And, for thy love to us in our extremes,
 Will ever keep thy chaplet fresh and green,
 Such as no poet's wreath hath ever been !

' And we'll distil thee aromatic dew,
 To charm thy sense, when there shall be no flow'rs ;
 And flavour'd syrops in thy drinks infuse,
 And teach the nightingale to haunt thy bow'rs.
 And with our games divert thy weariest hours,
 With all that elfin wits can e'er devise.
 And, this churl dead, there'll be no hasting hours
 To rob thee of thy joys, as now joy flies : '—
 Here she was stopp'd by Saturn's furious cries.

28 PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

Whom, therefore, the kind Shade rebukes anew,
Saying, 'Thou haggard Sin, go forth, and scoop
Thy hollow coffin in some churchyard yew,
Or make th' autumnal flow'rs turn pale, and droop ;
Or fell the bearded corn, till gleaners stoop
Under fat sheaves,—or blast the piny grove ;—
But here thou shalt not harm this pretty groupe,
Whose lives are not so frail and feebly wove,
But leas'd on Nature's loveliness and love.

' 'Tis these that free the small entangled fly,
Caught in the venom'd spider's crafty snare ;—
These be the petty surgeons that apply
The healing balsams to the wounded hare,
Beddled in bloody fern, no creature's care !—
These be, providers for the orphan brood,
Whose tender mother hath been slain in air,
Quitting with gaping bill her darling's food,
Hard by the verge of her domestic wood.

' 'Tis these befriend the timid trembling stag,
When, with a bursting heart beset with fears,
He feels his saving speed begin to flag ;
For then they quench the fatal taint with tears,
And prompt fresh shifts in his alarum'd ears,
So piteously they view all bloody morts ;
Of if the gunner, with his arm, appears,
Like noisy pyes and jays, with harsh reports,
They warn the wild fowl of his deadly sports.

' For these are kindly ministers of nature,
To soothe all covert hurts and dumb distress ;
Pretty they be, and very small of stature,—
For mércy still consorts with littleness ;—
Wherefore the sum of good is still the less,
And mischief grossest in this world of wrong ;—
So do these charitable dwarfs redress
The tenfold ravages of giants strong,
To whom great malice and great might belong.

' Likewise to them are Poets much beholden
 For secret favours in the midnight glooms ;
 Brave Spenser quaff'd out of their goblets golden,
 And saw their tables spread of prompt mushrooms,
 And heard their horns of honeysuckle blooms
 Sounding upon the air most soothing soft,
 Like humming bees busy about the brooms,—
 And glanc'd this fair queen's witchery full oft,
 And in her magic wain soared far aloft.

' Nay I myself, though mortal, once was nurs'd
 By fairy gossips, friendly at my birth,
 And in my childish ear glib Mab rehears'd
 Her breezy travels round our planet's girth,
 Telling me wonders of the moon and earth ;
 My gramarye at her grave lap I conn'd,
 Where Puck hath been conven'd to make me mirth ;
 I have had from Queen Titania tokens fond,
 And toy'd with Oberon's permitted wand.

' With figs and plums and Persian dates they fed me,
 And deliate cates after my sunset meal,
 And took me by my childish hand, and led me
 By craggy rocks crested with keeps of steel,
 Whose awful bases deep dark woods conceal,
 Staining some dead lake with their verdant dyes :
 And when the West sparkled at Phœbus' wheel,
 With fairy euphrasy they purg'd mine eyes,
 To let me see their cities in the skies.

' 'Twas they first school'd my young imagination
 To take its flights like any new-fledg'd bird,
 And show'd the span of winged meditation
 Stretch'd wider than things grossly seen or heard.
 With sweet swift Ariel how I soar'd and stirr'd
 The fragrant blooms of spiritual bow'rs !
 'Twas they endear'd what I have still preferr'd,
 Nature's blest attributes and balmy pow'rs,
 Her hills and vales and brooks, sweet birds and flow'rs !

30 PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

'Wherefore with all true loyalty and duty
Will I regard them in my honouring rhyme,
With love for love, and homages to beauty,
And magic thoughts gather'd in night's cool clime.
With studious verse trancing the dragon Time,
Strong as old Merlin's necromantic spells;
So these dear monarchs of the summer's prime
Shall live unstartled by his dreadful yells,
Till shrill larks warn them to their flowery cells.'

Look how a poison'd man turns livid black,
Drugg'd with a cup of deadly hellebore,
That sets his horrid features all at rack,—
So seem'd these words into the ear to pour
Of ghastly Saturn, answering with a roar
Of mortal pain and spite and utmost rage,
Wherewith his grisly arm he rais'd once more,
And bade the cluster'd sinews all engage,
As if at one fell stroke to wreck an age.

Whereas the blade flash'd on the dinted ground,
Down through his steadfast foe, yet made no scar
On that immortal Shade, or death-like wound;
But Time was long benumb'd, and stood ajar,
And then with baffled rage took flight afar,
To weep his hurt in some Cimmerian gloom,
Or meaner fames (like mine) to mock and mar,
Or sharp his scythe for royal strokes of doom,
Whetting its edge on some old Cæsar's tomb.

Howbeit he vanish'd in the forest shade,
Distantly heard as if some grumbling pard,
And, like Narcissus, to a sound decay'd;—
Meanwhile the fays cluster'd the gracious Bard,
The darling centre of their dear regard:
Besides of sundry dances on the green,
Never was mortal man so brightly starr'd,
Or won such pretty homages, I ween.
'Nod to him, Elves!' cries the melodious queen.

'Nod to him, Elves, and flutter round about him,
 And quite enclose him with your pretty crowd,
 And touch him lovingly, for that, without him,
 The silk-worm now had spun our dreary shroud ;—
 But he hath all dispers'd death's tearful cloud,
 And Time's dread effigy scar'd quite away :
 Bow to him then, as though to me ye bow'd,
 And his dear wishes prosper and obey
 Wherever love and wit can find a way !

'Noint him with fairy dew's of magic savours,
 Shaken from orient buds still pearly wet,
 Roses and spicy pinks,—and, of all favours,
 Plant in his walks the purple violet,
 And meadow-sweet under the hedges set,
 To mingle breaths with dainty eglantine
 And honeysuckles sweet,—nor yet forget
 Some pastoral flowery chaplèts to entwine,
 To vie the thoughts about his brow benign !

'Let no wild things astonish him or fear him,
 But tell them all how mild he is of heart,
 Till e'en the timid hares go frankly near him,
 And eke the dappled does, yet never start ;
 Nor shall their fawns into the thickets dart,
 Nor wrens forsake their nests among the leaves,
 Nor speckled thrushes flutter far apart ;—
 But bid the sacred swallow haunt his caves,
 To guard his roof from lightning and from thieves.

'Or when he goes the nimble squirrel's visitor,
 Let the brown hermit bring his hoarded nuts,
 For, tell him, this is Nature's kind Inquisitor,—
 Though man keeps cautious doors that conscience shuts,
 For conscious wrong all curious quest rebuts,—
 Nor yet shall bees uncase their jealous stings,
 However he may watch their straw-built huts ;—
 So let him learn the crafts of all small things,
 Which he will hint most aptly when he sings.'

32 PLEA OF THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

Here she leaves off, and with a graceful hand
Waves thrice three splendid circles round his head ;
Which, though deserted by the radiant wand,
Wears still the glory which her waving shed,
Such as erst crown'd the old Apostle's head,
To show the thoughts there harbour'd were divine,
And on immortal contemplations fed :—
Goodly it was to see that glory shine
Around a brow so lofty and benign !

Goodly it was to see the elfin brood
Contend for kisses of his gentle hand,
That had their mortal enemy withstood,
And stay'd their lives, fast ebbing with the sand.
Long while this strife engag'd the pretty band ;
But now bold Chanticleer, from farm to farm,
Challeng'd the dawn creeping o'er eastern land,
And well the fairies knew that shrill alarm,
Which sounds the knell of every elfish charm.

And soon the rolling mist, that 'gan arise
From plashy mead and undiscover'd stream,
Earth's morning incense to the early skies,
Crept o'er the failing landscape of my dream.
Soon faded then the Phantom of my theme—
A shapeless shade, that fancy disavow'd,
And shrank to nothing in the mist extreme.
Then flew Titania,—and her little crowd,
Like flocking linnets, vanish'd in a cloud.

HERO AND LEANDER

TO S. T. COLERIDGE, ESQ.

It is not with a hope my feeble praise
Can add one moment's honour to thy own,
That with thy mighty name I grace these lays ;
I seek to glorify myself alone :

For that same precious favour thou hast shown
To my endeavour in a by-gone time,
And by this token, I would have it known
Thou art my friend, and friendly to my rhyme !
It is my dear ambition now to climb
Still higher in thy thought,—if my bold pen
May thrust on contemplations more sublime.—
But I am thirsty for thy praise, for when
We gain applauses from the great in name,
We seem to be partakers of *their* fame.

OH Bards of old ! what sorrows have ye sung,
And tragic stories, chronicled in stone,—
Sad Philomel restor'd her ravish'd tongue,
And transformed Niobe in dumbness shown ;
Sweet Sappho on her love for ever calls,
And Hero on the drown'd Leander falls !

Was it that spectacles of sadder plights,
Should make our blisses relish the more high ?
Then all fair dames, and maidens, and true knights,
Whose flourish'd fortunes prosper in Love's eye,
Weep here, unto a tale of ancient grief,
Trac'd from the course of an old bas-relief.

There stands Abydos !—here is Sestos' steep,
Hard by the gusty margin of the sea,
Where sprinkling waves continually do leap ;
And that is where those famous lovers be,
A builded gloom shot up into the grey,
As if the first tall watch-tow'r of the day.

Lo ! how the lark soars upward and is gone ;
Turning a spirit as he nears the sky,
His voice is heard, though body there is none,
And rain-like music scatters from on high ;
But Love would follow with a falcon spite,
To pluck the minstrel from his dewy height.

For Love hath fram'd a ditty of regrets,
Tun'd to the hollow sobbings on the shore,
A vexing sense, that with like music frets,
And chimes this dismal burthen o'er and o'er,
Saying, Leander's joys are past and spent,
Like stars extinguish'd in the firmament.

For ere the golden crevices of morn
Let in those regal luxuries of light,
Which all the variable east adorn,
And hang rich fringes on the skirts of night,
Leander, weaning from sweet Hero's side,
Must leave a widow where he found a bride.

Hark ! how the billows beat upon the sand !
Like pawing steeds impatient of delay ;
Meanwhile their rider, ling'ring on the land,
Dallies with love, and holds farewell at bay
A too short span.—How tedious slow is grief !
But parting renders time both sad and brief.

' Alas (he sigh'd), that this first glimpsing light,
Which makes the wide world tenderly appear,
Should be the burning signal for my flight,
From all the world's best image, which is here ;
Whose very shadow, in my fond compare,
Shines far more bright than Beauty's self elsewhere.'

Their cheeks are white as blossoms of the dark,
Whose leaves close up and show the outward pale,
And those fair mirrors where their joys did spark,
All dim and tarnish'd with a dreary veil,
No more to kindle till the night's return,
Like stars replenish'd at Joy's golden urn.

Ev'n thus they creep into the spectral grey,
That cramps the landscape in its narrow brim,
As when two shadows by old Lethe stray,
He clasping her, and she entwining him ;
Like trees wind-parted that embrace anon,
True love so often goes before 'tis gone.

For what rich merchant but will pause in fear,
To trust his wealth to the unsafe abyss?
So Hero dotes upon her treasure here,
And sums the loss with many an anxious kiss,
Whilst, her fond eyes grow dizzy in her head,
Fear aggravating fear with shows of dread.

She thinks how many have been sunk and drown'd,
And spies their snow-white bones below the deep,
Then calls huge congregated monsters round,
And plants a rock wherever he would leap;
Anon she dwells on a fantastic dream,
Which she interprets of that fatal stream.

Saying, 'That honey'd fly I saw was thee,
Which lighted on a water-lily's cup,
When, lo! the flow'r, enamour'd of my bee,
Closed on him suddenly and lock'd him up,
And he was smother'd in her drenching dew;
Therefore this day thy drowning I shall rue.'

But next, remembering her virgin fame,
She clips him in her arms and bids him go,
But seeing him break loose, repents her shame,
And plucks him back upon her bosom's snow;
And tears unfix her iced resolve again,
As steadfast frosts are thawed by show'rs of rain.

O for a type of parting!—Love to love
Is like the fond attraction of two spheres,
Which needs a godlike effort to remove,
And then sink down their sunny atmospheres,
In rain and darkness on each ruin'd heart,
Nor yet their melodies will sound apart.

So brave Leander sunders from his bride;
The wrenching pang disparts his soul in twain;
Half stays with her, half goes towards the tide,—
And life must ache, until they join again.
Now would'st thou know the wideness of the wound,
Mete every step he takes upon the ground.

And for the agony and bosom-throe,
Let it be measur'd by the wide vast air,
For that is infinite, and so is woe,
Since parted lovers breathe it every where.
Look how it heaves Leander's labouring chest,
Panting, at poise, upon a rocky crest!

From which he leaps into the scooping brine,
That shocks his bosom with a double chill;
Because, all hours, till the slow sun's decline,
That cold divorcer will betwixt them still;
Wherefore he likens it to Styx' foul tide,
Where life grows death upon the other side.

Then sadly he confronts his two-fold toil
Against rude waves and an unwilling mind,
Wishing, alas! with the stout rower's toil,
That like a rower he might gaze behind,
And watch that lonely statue he hath left
On her bleak summit, weeping and bereft!

Yet turning oft, he sees her troubled locks
Pursue him still the furthest that they may;
Her marble arms that overstretch the rocks,
And her pale passion'd hands that seem to pray
In dumb petition to the gods above:
Love prays devoutly when it prays for love!

Then with deep sighs he blows away the wave,
That hangs superfluous tears upon his cheek,
And bans his labour like a hopeless slave,
That, chain'd in hostile galley, faint and weak,
Plies on despairing through the restless foam,
Thoughtful of his lost love, and far-off home.

The drowsy mist before him chill and dank,
Like a dull lethargy o'erleans the sea,
Where he rows on against the utter blank,
Steering as if to dim eternity,—
Like Love's frail ghost departing with the dawn;
A failing shadow in the twilight drawn.

And soon is gone,—or nothing but a faint
And failing image in the eye of thought,
That mocks his model with an after-paint,
And stains an atom like the shape she sought;
Then with her earnest vows she hopes to fee,
The old and hoary majesty of sea.

‘O King of waves, and brother of high Jove,
Preserve my sumless venture there afloat;
A woman’s heart, and its whole wealth of love,
Are all embark’d upon that little boat;
Nay, but two loves, two lives, a double fate,
A perilous voyage for so dear a freight.

‘If impious mariners be stain’d with crime,
Shake not in awful rage thy hoary locks;
Lay by thy storms until another time,
Lest my frail bark be dash’d against the rocks:
Or rather smooth thy deeps, that he may fly
Like Love himself, upon a seeming sky!

‘Let all thy herded monsters sleep beneath,
Nor gore him with crook’d tusks, or wreathed horns;
Let no fierce sharks destroy him with their teeth,
Nor spine-fish wound him with their venom’d thorns;
But if he faint, and timely succour lack,
Let ruthful dolphins rest him on their back.

‘Let no false dimpling whirlpools suck him in,
Nor slimy quicksands smother his sweet breath;
Let no jagg’d corals tear his tender skin,
Nor mountain billows bury him in death;’—
And with that thought forestalling her own fears,
She drown’d his painted image in her tears.

By this, the climbing sun, with rest repair’d,
Look’d through the gold embrasures of the sky,
And ask’d the drowsy world how she had far’d;—
The drowsy world shone brighten’d in reply;
And smiling off her fogs, his slanting beam
Spied young Leander in the middle stream.

His face was pallid, but the hectic morn
Had hung a lying crimson on his cheeks,
And slanderous sparkles in his eyes forlorn ;
So death lies ambush'd in consumptive streaks ;
But inward grief was writhing o'er its task,
As heart-sick jesters weep behind the mask.

He thought of Hero and the lost delight,
Her last embracings, and the space between ;
He thought of Hero and the future night,
Her speechless rapture and enamour'd mien,
When, lo ! before him, scarce two galleys' space,
His thought's confronted with another face !

Her aspect's like a moon divinely fair,
But makes the midnight darker that it lies on ;
'Tis so beclouded with her coal-black hair
That densely skirts her luminous horizon,
Making her doubly fair, thus darkly set,
As marble lies advantag'd upon jet.

She's all too bright, too argent, and too pale,
To be a woman ;—but a woman's double,
Reflected on the wave so faint and frail,
She tops the billows like an air-blown bubble ;
Or dim creation of a morning dream,
Fair as the wave-bleach'd lily of the stream.

The very rumour strikes his seeing dead :
Great beauty like great fear first stuns the sense :
He knows not if her lips be blue or red,
Nor if her eyes can give true evidence :
Like murder's witness swooning in the court,
His sight falls senseless by its own report.

Anon resuming, it declares her eyes
Are tinct with azure, like two crystal wells
That drink the blue complexion of the skies,
Or pearls outpeeping from their silvery shells :
Her polish'd brow, it is an ample plain,
To lodge vast contemplations of the main.

Her lips might corals seem, but corals near,
Stray through her hair like blossoms on a bower ;
And o'er the weaker red still domineer,
And make it pale by tribute to more power ;
Her rounded cheeks are of still paler hue,
Touch'd by the bloom of water, tender blue.

Thus he beholds her rocking on the water,
Under the glossy umbrage of her hair,
Like pearly Amphitrite's fairest daughter
Naiad, or Nereid,—or Syren fair,
Mislodging music in her pitiless breast,
A nightingale within a falcon's nest.

They say there be such maidens in the deep,
Charming poor mariners, that all too near
By mortal lullabies fall dead asleep,
As drowsy men are poison'd through the ear ;
Therefore Leander's fears begin to urge,
This snowy swan is come to sing his dirge.

At which he falls into a deadly chill,
And strains his eyes upon her lips apart ;
Fearing each breath to feel that prelude shrill,
Pierce through his marrow, like a breath-blown dart
Shot sudden from an Indian's hollow cane,
With mortal venom fraught, and fiery pain.

Here then, poor wretch, how he begins to crowd
A thousand thoughts within a pulse's space ;
There seem'd so brief a pause of life allow'd,
His mind stretch'd universal, to embrace
The whole wide world, in an extreme farewell,—
A moment's musing—but an age to tell.

For there stood Hero, widow'd at a glance,
The foreseen sum of many a tedious fact,
Pale cheeks, dim eyes, and wither'd countenance,
A wasted ruin that no wasting lack'd ;
Time's tragic consequents ere time began,
A world of sorrow in a tear-drop's span.

A moment's thinking, is an hour in words,—
An hour of words is little for some woes ;
Too little breathing a long life affords,
For love to paint itself by perfect shows ;
Then let his love and grief unwrong'd lie dumb,
Whilst Fear, and that it fears, together come.

As when the crew, hard by some jutting cape,
Struck pale and panick'd by the billows' roar,
Lay by all timely measures of escape,
And let their bark go driving on the shore ;
So fray'd Leander, drifting to his wreck,
Gazing on Scylla, falls upon her neck.

For he hath all forgot the swimmer's art,
The rower's cunning, and the pilot's skill,
Letting his arms fall down in languid part,
Sway'd by the waves, and nothing by his will.
Till soon he jars against that glossy skin,
Solid like glass, though seemingly as thin.

Lo ! how she startles at the warning shock,
And straightway girds him to her radiant breast,
More like his safe smooth harbour than his rock ;
Poor wretch, he is so faint and toil-opprest,
He cannot loose him from his grappling foe,
Whether for love or hate, she lets not go.

His eyes are blinded with the sleety brine,
His ears are deafen'd with the wildering noise ;
He asks the purpose of her fell design,
But foamy waves choke up his struggling voice ;
Under the ponderous sea his body dips,
And Hero's name dies bubbling on his lips.

Look how a man is lower'd to his grave ;
A yearning hollow in the green earth's lap ;
So he is sunk into the yawning wave,
The plunging sea fills up the watery gap :
Anon he is all gone, and nothing seen,
But likeness of green turf and hillocks green.

And where he swam, the constant sun lies sleeping,
Over the verdant plain that makes his bed ;
And all the noisy waves go freshly leaping,
Like gamesome boys over the churchyard dead ;
The light in vain keeps looking for his face,
Now screaming sea-fowl settle in his place.

Yet weep and watch for him though all in vain !
Ye moaning billows, seek him as ye wander !
Ye gazing sunbeams, look for him again !
Ye winds, grow hoarse with asking for Leander !
Ye did but spare him for more cruel rape,
Sea-storm and ruin in a female shape !

She says 'tis love hath bribed her to this dead,
The glancing of his eyes did so bewitch her,
O bootless theft ! unprofitable meed !
Love's treasury is sack'd, but she no richer ;
The sparkles of his eyes are cold and dead,
And all his golden looks are turn'd to lead !

She holds the casket, but her simple hand
Hath spill'd its dearest jewel by the way ;
She hath life's empty garment at command,
But her own death lies covert in the prey ;
As if a thief should steal a tainted vest,
Some dead man's spoil, and sicken of his pest.

Now she compels him to her deeps below,
Hiding his face beneath her plenteous hair.
Which jealously she shakes all round her brow,
For dread of envy, though no eyes are there
But seals', and all brute tenants of the deep,
Which heedless through the wave their journeys keep.

Down and still downward through the dusky green
She bore him, murmuring with joyous haste
In too rash ignorance, as he had been
Born to the texture of that watery waste ;
That which she breath'd and sigh'd, the emerald wave,
How could her pleasant home become his grave !

Down and still downward through the dusky green
She bore her treasure, with a face too nigh
To mark how life was alter'd in its mien,
Or how the light grew torpid in his eye,
Or how his pearly breath unprison'd there,
Flew up to join the universal air.

She could not miss the throbbings of his heart,
Whilst her own pulse so wanton'd in its joy ;
She could not guess he struggled to depart,
And when he strove no more, the hapless boy !
She read his mortal stillness for content,
Feeling no fear where only love was meant.

Soon she alights upon her ocean-floor,
And straight unyokes her arms from her fair prize ;
Then on his lovely face begins to pore,
As if to glut her soul ;—her hungry eyes
Have grown so jealous of her arms' delight ;
It seems, she hath no other sense but sight.

But O sad marvel ! O most bitter strange !
What dismal magic makes his cheek so pale,
Why will he not embrace,—why not exchange
Her kindly kisses ;—wherefore not exhale
Some odorous message from life's ruby gates,
Where she his first sweet embassy awaits ?

Her eyes, poor watchers, fix'd upon his looks,
Are grappled with a wonder near to grief,
As one, who pores on undecypher'd books,
Strains vain surmise, and dodges with belief ;
So she keeps gazing with a mazy thought,
Framing a thousand doubts that end in nought.

Too stern inscription for a page so young,
The dark translation of his look was death !
But death was written in an alien tongue,
And learning was not by to give it breath ;
So one deep woe sleeps buried in its seal,
Which Time, untimely, hasteth to reveal.

Meanwhile she sits unconscious of her hap,
Nursing Death's marble effigy, which there
With heavy head lies pillow'd in her lap,
And elbows all unhinged ;—his sleeking hair
Creeps o'er her knees, and settles where his hand
Leans with lax fingers crook'd against the sand ;

And there lies spread in many an oozy trail,
Like glossy weeds hung from a chalky base,
That shows no whiter than his brow is pale ;
So soon the wintry death had bleach'd his face
Into cold marble,—with blue chilly shades,
Showing wherein the freezy blood pervades.

And o'er his steadfast cheek a furrow'd pain
Hath set, and stiffen'd like a storm in ice,
Showing by drooping lines the deadly strain
Of mortal anguish ;—yet you might gaze twice
Ere Death it seem'd, and not his cousin, Sleep,
That through those creviced lids did underpeep.

But all that tender bloom about his eyes,
Is death's own vi'lets, which his utmost rite
It is to scatter when the red rose dies ;
For blue is chilly, and akin to white :
Also he leaves some tinges on his lips,
Which he hath kiss'd with such cold frosty nips.

' Surely,' quoth she, ' he sleeps, the senseless thing,
Oppress'd and faint with toiling in the stream !'
Therefore she will not mar his rest, but sing
So low, her tune shall mingle with his dream ;
Meanwhile, her lily fingers tasks to twine
His uncrispt locks uncurling in the brine.

' O lovely boy !'—thus she attun'd her voice,—
' Welcome, thrice welcome, to a sea-maid's home,
My love-mate thou shalt be, and true heart's choice ;
How have I long'd such a twin-self should come,—
A lonely thing, till this sweet chance befel,
My heart kept sighing like a hollow shell.

' Here thou shalt live, beneath this secret dome,
An ocean bow'r, defended by the shade
Of quiet waters; a cool emerald gloom
To lap thee all about. Nay, be not fray'd,
Those are but shady fishes that sail by
Like antic clouds across my liquid sky!

' Look how the sunbeam burns upon their scales,
And shows rich glimpses of their Tyrian skins,
They flash small lightnings from their vigorous tails
And winking stars are kindled at their fins;
These shall divert thee in thy weariest mood,
And seek thy hand for gamesomeness and food.

' Lo! those green pretty leaves with tassel bells,
My flowrets those, that never pine for drowth;
Myself did plant them in the dappled shells,
That drink the wave with such a rosy mouth,—
Pearls wouldst thou have beside? crystals to shine
I had such treasures once,—now they are thine.

' Now, lay thine ear against this golden sand,
And thou shalt hear the music of the sea,
Those hollow tunes it plays against the land,—
Is't not a rich and wondrous melody?
I have lain hours, and fancied in its tone
I heard the languages of ages gone!

' I too can sing when it shall please thy choice,
And breathe soft tunes through a melodious shell,
Though heretofore I have but set my voice
To some long sighs, grief harmonized, to tell
How desolate I fared;—but this sweet change
Will add new notes of gladness to my range!

' Or bid me speak and I will tell thee tales,
Which I have framed out of the noise of waves;
Ere now, I have commun'd with senseless gales,
And held vain colloquies with barren caves;
But I could talk to thee whole days and days.
Only to word my love a thousand ways.

‘But if thy lips will bless me with their speech,
Then ope, sweet oracles! and I’ll be mute;
I was born ignorant for thee to teach,
Nay all love’s lore to thy dear looks impute;
Then ope thine eyes, fair teachers, by whose light
I saw to give away my heart aright!’

But cold and deaf the sullen creature lies,
Over her knees, and with concealing clay,
Like hoarding Avarice locks up his eyes,
And leaves the world impoverish’d of day;
Then at his cruel lips she bends to plead,
But there the door is close against her need.

Surely he sleeps,—so her false wits infer!
Alas! poor sluggard, ne’er to wake again!
Surely he sleeps, yet without any stir
That might denote a vision in his brain;
Or if he does not sleep, he feigns too long,
Twice she hath reach’d the ending of her song.

Therefore ’tis time she tells him to uncover
Those radiant jesters, and disperse her fears,
Whereby her April face is shaded over,
Like rainy clouds just ripe for showering tears;
Nay, if he will not wake, so poor she gets,
Herself must rob those lock’d up cabinets.

With that she stoops above his brow, and bids
Her busy hands forsake his tangled hair,
And tenderly lift up those coffer-lids,
That she may gaze upon the jewels there,
Like babes that pluck an early bud apart,
To know the dainty colour of its heart.

Now, picture one, soft creeping to a bed,
Who slowly parts the fringe-hung canopies,
And then starts back to find the sleeper dead;
So she looks in on his uncover’d eyes,
And seeing all within so drear and dark,
Her own bright soul dies in her like a spark.

Backward she falls, like a pale prophetess,
Under the swoon of holy divination :
And what had all surpass'd her simple guess,
She now resolves in this dark revelation ;
Death's very mystery,—oblivious death ;—
Long sleep,—deep night, and an entranced breath.

Yet life, though wounded sore, not wholly slain,
Merely obscur'd, and not extinguish'd, lies ;
Her breath that stood at ebb, soon flows again,
Heaving her hollow breast with heavy sighs,
And light comes in and kindles up the gloom,
To light her spirit from its transient tomb.

Then like the sun, awaken'd at new dawn,
With pale bewilder'd face she peers about,
And spies blurr'd images obscurely drawn,
Uncertain shadows in a haze of doubt ;
But her true grief grows shapely by degrees,
A perish'd creature lying on her knees.

And now she knows how that old Murther preys,
Whose quarry on her lap lies newly slain ;
How he roams all abroad and grimly slays,
Like a lean tiger in Love's own domain ;
Parting from mates,—and oft in flowery lawns
Bereaves mild mothers of their milky fawns.

O too dear knowledge ! O pernicious earning !
Foul curse engraven upon beauty's page !
Ev'n now the sorrow of that deadly learning
Ploughs up her brow, like an untimely age,
And on her cheek stamps verdict of death's truth,
By canker blights upon the bud of youth !

For as unwholesome winds decay the leaf,
So her cheeks' rose is perished by her sighs,
And withers in the sickly breath of grief ;
Whilst unacquainted rheum bedims her eyes,
Tears, virgin tears, the first that ever leapt
From those young lids, now plentifully wept.

Whence being shed, the liquid crystalline
Drops straightway down, refusing to partake
In gross admixture with the baser brine,
But shrinks and hardens into pearls opaque,
Hereafter to be worn on arms and ears ;
So one maid's trophy is another's tears !

' O foul Arch-Shadow, thou old cloud of Night,
(Thus in her frenzy she began to wail,)
Thou blank oblivion—blotter out of light,
Life's ruthless murderer, and dear love's bale !
Why hast thou left thy havoc incomplete,
Leaving me here, and slaying the more sweet ?

' Lo ! what a lovely ruin thou hast made,
Alas ! alas ! thou hast no eyes to see,
And blindly slew'st him in misguided shade.
Would I had lent my doting sense to thee !
But now I turn to thee, a willing mark,
Thine arrows miss me in the aimless dark !

' O doubly cruel !—twice misdoing spite,
But I will guide thee with my helping eyes,
Or walk the wide world through, devoid of sight,
Yet thou shalt know me by my many sighs.
Nay, then thou should'st have spared my rose, false
Death,
And known Love's flow'r by smelling his sweet breath ;

' Or, when thy furious rage was round him dealing,
Love should have grown from touching of his skin,
But like cold marble thou art all unfeeling,
And hast no ruddy springs of warmth within,
And being but a shape of freezing bone,
Thy touching only turn'd my love to stone !

' And here, alas ! he lies across my knees,
With cheeks still colder than the stilly wave,
The light beneath his eyelids seems to freeze,
Here then, since Love is dead and lacks a grave,
O come and dig it in my sad heart's core—
That wound will bring a balsam for its sore !

'For art thou not a sleep where sense of ill,
Lies stingless, like a sense benumb'd with cold,
Healing all hurts only with sleep's good will,
So shall I slumber, and perchance behold
My living love in dreams,—O happy night,
That lets me company his banished spright!

'O poppy Death!—sweet poisoner of sleep!
Where shall I seek for thee, oblivious drug,
That I may steep thee in my drink, and creep
Out of life's coil. Look, Idol! how I hug
Thy dainty image in this strict embrace,
And kiss this clay-cold model of thy face!

'Put out, put out these sun-consuming lamps,
I do but read my sorrows by their shine,
O come and quench them with thy oozy damp,
And let my darkness intermix with thine;
Since love is blinded, wherefore should I see,
Now love is death,—death will be love to me!

'Away, away, this vain complaining breath,
It does but stir the troubles that I weep,
Let it be hush'd and quieted, sweet Death,
The wind must settle ere the wave can sleep,—
Since love is silent, I would fain be mute,
O Death, be gracious to my dying suit!'

Thus far she pleads, but pleading nought avails her
For Death, her sullen burthen, deigns no heed,
Then with dumb craving arms, since darkness fails her
She prays to heav'n's fair light, as if her need
Inspir'd her there were Gods to pity pain,
Or end it,—but she lifts her arms in vain!

Poor gilded Grief! the subtle light by this
With mazy gold creeps through her watery mine,
And, diving downward through the green abyss,
Lights up her palace with an amber shine;
There, falling on her arms,—the crystal skin
Reveals the ruby tide that fares within.

Look how the fulsome beam would hang a glory
On her dark hair, but the dark hairs repel it;
Look how the perjur'd glow suborns a story
On her pale lips, but lips refuse to tell it;
Grief will not swerve from grief, however told
On coral lips, or character'd in gold;

Or else, thou maid! safe anchor'd on Love's neck,
Listing the hapless doom of young Leander,
Thou would'st not shed a tear for that old wreck,
Sitting secure where no wild surges wander;
Whereas the woe moves on with tragic pace,
And shows its sad reflection in thy face.

Thus having travell'd on, and track'd the tale
Like the true course of an old bas-relief,
Where Tragedy pursues her progress pale,
Brood here awhile upon that sea-maid's grief,
And take a deeper imprint from the frieze
Of that young Fate, with Death upon her knees.

Then whilst the melancholy muse withal
Resumes her music in a sadder tone,
Meanwhile the sunbeam strikes upon the wall,
Conceive that lovely siren to live on,
Ev'n as Hope whisper'd, the Promethean light
Would kindle up the dead Leander's spright.

' 'Tis light,' she says, 'that feeds the glittering stars,
And those were stars set in his heavenly brow,
But this salt cloud, this cold sea-vapour, mars
Their radiant breathing, and obscures them now,
Therefore I'll lay him in the clear blue air,
And see how these dull orbs will kindle there.'

Swiftly as dolphins glide, or swifter yet,
With dead Leander in her fond arms' fold,
She cleaves the meshes of that radiant net,
The sun hath twin'd above of liquid gold,
Nor slacks, till on the margin of the land,
She lays his body on the glowing sand.

There, like a pearly waif, just past the reach
Of foamy billows he lies cast. Just then,
Some listless fishers, straying down the beach,
Spy out this wonder. Thence the curious men,
Low crouching, creep into a thicket brake,
And watch her doings till their rude hearts ache.

First she begins to chafe him till she faints,
Then falls upon his mouth with kisses many,
And sometimes pauses in her own complaints
To list his breathing, but there is not any,—
Then looks into his eyes where no light dwells,
Light makes no pictures in such muddy wells.

The hot sun parches his discover'd eyes,
The hot sun beats on his discolour'd limbs,
The sand is oozy whereupon he lies,
Soiling his fairness ;—then away she swims,
Meaning to gather him a daintier bed,
Plucking the cool fresh weeds, brown, green, and red.

But, simple-witted thief, while she dives under,
Another robs her of her amorous theft ;
The ambush'd fishermen creep forth to plunder,
And steal the unwatch'd treasure she has left ;
Only his void impression dints the sands ;
Leander is purloin'd by stealthy hands !

Lo ! how she shudders off the beaded wave !
Like Grief all over tears, and senseless falls,
His void imprint seems hollow'd for her grave,
Then, rising on her knees, looks round and calls
On Hero ! Hero ! having learn'd this name
Of his last breath, she calls him by the same.

Then with her frantic hands she rends her hairs,
And casts them forth, sad keepsakes to the wind,
As if in plucking those she pluck'd her cares ;
But grief lies deeper, and remains behind
Like a barb'd arrow, rankling in her brain,
Turning her very thoughts to throbs of pain.

Anon her tangled locks are left alone,
And down upon the sand she meekly sits,
Hard by the foam as humble as a stone,
Like an enchanted maid beside her wits,
That ponders with a look serene and tragic,
Stunn'd by the mighty mystery of magic.

Or think of Ariadne's utter trance,
Craz'd by the flight of that disloyal traitor,
Who left her gazing on the green expanse
That swallow'd up his track,—yet this would mate her,
Ev'n in the cloudy summit of her woe,
When o'er the far sea-brim she saw him go.

For even so she bows, and bends her gaze
O'er the eternal waste, as if to sum
Its waves by weary thousands all her days,
Dismally doom'd! meanwhile the billows come,
And coldly dabble with her quiet feet,
Like any bleaching stones they wont to greet.

And thence into her lap have boldly sprung,
Washing her weedy tresses to and fro,
That round her crouching knees have darkly hung,
But she sits careless of waves' ebb and flow,
Like a lone beacon on a desert coast,
Showing where all her hope was wreck'd and lost.

Yet whether in the sea or vaulted sky,
She knoweth not her love's abrupt resort,
So like a shape of dreams he left her eye,
Winking with doubt. Meanwhile, the churl's report
Has throng'd the beach with many a curious face,
That peeps upon her from its hiding place.

And here a head, and there a brow half seen,
Dodges behind a rock. Here on his hands,
A mariner his crumpled cheeks doth lean
Over a rugged crest. Another stands,
Holding his harmful arrow at the head,
Still check'd by human caution and strange dread.

One stops his ears,—another close beholder
Whispers unto the next his grave surmise ;
This crouches down,—and just above his shoulder,
A woman's pity saddens in her eyes,
And prompts her to befriend that lonely grief,
With all sweet helps of sisterly relief.

And down the sunny beach she paces slowly,
With many doubtful pauses by the way ;
Grief hath an influence so hush'd and holy—
Making her twice attempt, ere she can lay
Her hand upon that sea-maid's shoulder white,
Which makes her startle up in wild affright.

And, like a seal, she leaps into the wave
That drowns the shrill remainder of her scream ;
Anon the sea fills up the watery cave,
And seals her exit with a foamy seam,—
Leaving those baffled gazers on the beach,
Turning in uncouth wonder each to each.

Some watch, some call, some see her head emerge,
Wherever a brown weed falls through the foam ;
Some point to white eruptions of the surge :—
But she is vanished to her shady home,
Under the deep, inscrutable,—and there
Weeps in a midnight made of her own hair.

Now here, the sighing winds, before unheard,
Forth from their cloudy caves begin to blow,
Till all the surface of the deep is stirr'd,
Like to the panting grief it hides below ;
And heav'n is cover'd with a stormy rack,
Soiling the waters with its inky black.

The screaming fowl resigns her finny prey,
And labours shoreward with a bending wing,
Rowing against the wind her toilsome way ;
Meanwhile, the curling billows chafe, and fling
Their dewy frost still further on the stones,
That answer to the wind with hollow groans.

And here and there a fisher's far-off bark
Flies with the sun's last glimpse upon its sail,
Like a bright flame amid the waters dark,
Watch'd with the hope and fear of maidens pale;
And anxious mothers that upturn their brows,
Freighting the gusty wind with frequent vows,

For that the horrid deep has no sure track
To guide love safe into his homely haven.
And lo! the storm grows blacker in its wrath,
O'er the dark billow brooding like a raven,
That bodes of death and widow's sorrowing,
Under the dusky covering of his wing.

And so day ended. But no vesper spark
Hung forth its heavenly sign; but sheets of flame
Play'd round the savage features of the dark,
Making night horrible. That night, there came
A weeping maiden to high Sestos' steep,
And tore her hair, and gaz'd upon the deep.

And wav'd aloft her bright and ruddy torch,
Whose flame the boastful wind so rudely fann'd,
That oft it would recoil, and basely scorch
The tender covert of her sheltering hand;
Which yet, for love's dear sake, disdain'd retire,
And, like a glorying martyr, brav'd the fire.

For that was love's own sign and beacon guide
Across the Hellespont's wide weary space,
Wherein he nightly struggled with the tide;
Look what a red it forges on her face,
As if she blush'd at holding such a light,
Ev'n in the unseen presence of the night!

Whereas her tragic cheek is truly pale,
And colder than the rude and ruffian air
That howls into her ear a horrid tale
Of storm, and wreck, and uttermost despair,
Saying, 'Leander floats amid the surge,
And those are dismal waves that sing his dirge.'

And hark !—a grieving voice, trembling and faint,
Blends with the hollow sobbings of the sea ;
Like the sad music of a siren's plaint,
But shriller than Leander's voice should be,
Unless the wintry death had changed its tone,—
Wherefore she thinks she hears his spirit moan.

For now, upon each brief and breathless pause,
Made by the raging winds, it plainly calls
On Hero ! Hero !—whereupon she draws
Close to the dizzy brink, that ne'er appals
Her brave and constant spirit to recoil,
However the wild billows toss and toil.

' Oh ! dost thou live under the deep deep sea ?
I thought such love as thine could never die ;
If thou hast gain'd an immortality,
From the kind pitying sea-god, so will I ;
And this false cruel tide that used to sever
Our hearts, shall be our common home for ever !

' There we will sit and sport upon one billow,
And sing our ocean ditties all the day,
And lie together on the same green pillow,
That curls above us with its dewy spray ;
And ever in one presence live and dwell,
Like two twin pearls within the selfsame shell.'

One moment, then, upon the dizzy verge
She stands ;—with face upturn'd against the sky ;
A moment more, upon the foamy surge
She gazes, with a calm despairing eye ;
Feeling that awful pause of blood and breath
Which life endures when it confronts with death ;—

Then from the giddy steep she madly springs,
Grasping her maiden robes, that vainly kept
Panting abroad, like unavailing wings,
To save her from her death.—The sea-maid wept,
And in a crystal cave her corse enshrin'd,
No meaner sepulchre should Hero find !

LYCUS, THE CENTAUR

FROM AN UNROLLED MANUSCRIPT OF APOLLONIUS CURIUS

THE ARGUMENT

Lycus, detained by Circe in her magical dominion, is beloved by a Water Nymph, who desiring to render him immortal, has recourse to the Sorceress. Circe gives her an incantation to pronounce, which should turn Lycus into a horse; but the horrible effect of the charm causing her to break off in the midst, he becomes a Centaur.

Who hath ever been lured and bound by a spell
To wander, fore-doom'd, in that circle of hell
Where Witchery works with her will like a god,
Works more than the wonders of time at a nod,—
At a word,—at a touch,—at a flash of the eye,
But each form is a cheat, and each sound is a lie,
Things born of a wish—to endure for a thought,
Or last for long ages—to vanish to nought,
Or put on new semblance? O Jove, I had given
The throne of a kingdom to know if that heaven,
And the earth and its streams were of Circe, or whether
They kept the world's birth-day and brighten'd together!
For I lov'd them in terror, and constantly dreaded
That the earth where I trod, and the cave where I
bedded,

The face I might dote on, should live out the lease
Of the charm that created, and suddenly cease:
And I gave me to slumber, as if from one dream
To another—each horrid—and drank of the stream
Like a first taste of blood, lest as water I quaff'd
Swift poison, and never should breathe from the
draught,—

Such drink as her own monarch husband drain'd up
When he pledg'd her, and Fate clos'd his eyes in the cup.
And I pluck'd of the fruit with held breath, and a fear
That the branch would start back and scream out in my
ear;

For once, at my suppering, I pluck'd in the dusk
An apple, juice-gushing and fragrant of musk ;
But by daylight my fingers were crimson'd with gore,
And the half-eaten fragment was flesh at the core ;
And once—only once—for the love of its blush,
I broke a bloom bough, but there came such a gush
On my hand, that it fainted away in weak fright,
While the leaf-hidden woodpecker shriek'd at the sight ;
And oh ! such an agony thrill'd in that note,
That my soul, startling up, beat its wings in my throat,
As it long'd to be free of a body whose hand
Was doom'd to work torments a Fury had plann'd !

There I stood without stir, yet how willing to flee,
As if rooted and horror-turn'd into a tree,—
Oh ! for innocent death,—and to suddenly win it,
I drank of the stream, but no poison was in it ; .
I plung'd in its waters, but ere I could sink,
Some invisible fate pull'd me back to the brink ;
I sprang from the rock, from its pinnacle height,
But fell on the grass with a grasshopper's flight ;
I ran at my fears—they were fears and no more,
For the bear would not mangle my limbs, nor the boar,
But moan'd,—all their brutaliz'd flesh could not smother,
The horrible truth,—we were kin to each other !

They were mournfully gentle, and group'd for relief,
All foes in their skin, but all friends in their grief :
The leopard was there,—baby-mild in its feature ;
And the tiger, black barr'd, with the gaze of a creature
That knew gentle pity ; the bristle-back'd boar,
His innocent tusks stain'd with mulberry gore ;
And the laughing hyena—but laughing no more ;
And the snake, not with magical orbs to devise
Strange death, but with woman's attraction of eyes ;
The tall ugly ape, that still bore a dim shine
Through his hairy eclipse of a manhood divine ;
And the elephant stately, with more than its reason,
How thoughtful in sadness ! but this is no season
To reckon them up from the lag-bellied toad
To the mammoth, whose sobs shook his ponderous load.

There were woes of all shapes, wretched forms, when
I came,
That hung down their heads with a human-like shame ;
The elephant hid in the boughs, and the bear
Shed over his eyes the dark veil of his hair ;
And the womanly soul turning sick with disgust,
Tried to vomit herself from her serpentine crust ;
While all groan'd their groans into one at their lot,
As I brought them the image of what they were not.

Then rose a wild sound of the human voice choking
Through vile brutal organs—low tremulous croaking ;
Cries swallow'd abruptly—deep animal tones
Attun'd to strange passion, and full-utter'd groans ;
All shuddering weaker, till hush'd in a pause
Of tongues in mute motion and wide-yearning jaws ;
And I guess'd that those horrors were meant to tell o'er
The tale of their woes ; but the silence told more
That writhed on their tongues ; and I knelt on the sod,
And pray'd with my voice to the cloud-stirring God,
For the sad congregation of supplicants there,
That upturn'd to his heaven brute faces of prayer ;
And I ceased, and they utter'd a moaning so deep,
That I wept for my heart-ease,—but they could not
weep,
And gazed with red eye-balls, all wistfully dry,
At the comfort of tears in a stag's human eye.
Then I motion'd them round, and, to soothe their distress,

I caress'd, and they bent them to meet my caress,
Their necks to my arm, and their heads to my palm,
And with poor grateful eyes suffer'd meekly and calm
Those tokens of kindness, withheld by hard fate
From returns that might chill the warm pity to hate ;
So they passively bow'd—save the serpent, that leapt
To my breast like a sister, and pressingly crept
In embrace of my neck, and with close kisses blister'd
My lips in rash love,—then drew backward, and glister'd
Her eyes in my face, and loud hissing affright,
Dropt down, and swift started away from my sight !

This sorrow was theirs, but thrice wretched my lot,
 Turn'd brute in my soul, though my body was not
 When I fled from the sorrow of womanly faces,
 That shrouded their woe in the shade of lone places,
 And dash'd off bright tears, till their fingers were wet,
 And then wiped their lids with long tresses of jet :
 But I fled—though they stretch'd out their hands, all
 entangled

With hair, and blood-stain'd of the breasts they had
 mangled,—

Though they call'd—and perchance but to ask, had
 I seen

Their loves, or to tell the vile wrongs that had been :
 But I stay'd not to hear, lest the story should hold
 Some hell-form of words, some enchantment once told,
 Might translate me in flesh to a brute ; and I dreaded
 To gaze on their charms, lest my faith should be wedded
 With some pity,—and love in that pity perchance—
 To a thing not all lovely ; for once at a glance
 Methought, where one sat, I descried a bright wonder
 That flow'd like a long silver rivulet under
 The long fenny grass, with so lovely a breast,
 Could it be a snake-tail made the charm of the rest ?

So I roam'd in that circle of horrors, and Fear
 Walk'd with me, by hills, and in valleys, and near
 Cluster'd trees for their gloom—not to shelter from heat—
 But lest a brute-shadow should grow at my feet ;
 And besides that full oft in the sunshiny place,
 Dark shadows would gather like clouds on its face,
 In the horrible likeness of demons, (that none
 Could see, like invisible flames in the sun ;)
 But grew to one monster that seized on the light,
 Like the dragon that strangles the moon in the night ;
 Fierce sphinxes, long serpents, and asps of the South ;
 Wild birds of huge beak, and all horrors that drouth
 Engenders of slime in the land of the pest,
 Vile shapes without shape, and foul bats of the West,
 Bringing Night on their wings ; and the bodies wherein
 Great Brahma imprisons the spirits of sin,

Many-handed, that blent in one phantom of fight
Like a Titan, and threatfully warr'd with the light ;
I have heard the wild shriek that gave signal to close,
When they rush'd on that shadowy Python of foes ;
That met with sharp beaks and wide gaping of jaws,
With flapping of wings, and fierce grasping of claws,
And whirls of long tails :—I have seen the quick flutter
Of fragments dissever'd,—and necks stretch'd to utter
Long screamings of pain,—the swift motion of blows,
And wrestling of arms—to the flight at the close,
When the dust of the earth startled upward in rings,
And flew on the whirlwind that follow'd their wings.

Thus they fled—not forgotten—but often to grow
Like fears in my eyes, when I walk'd to and fro
In the shadows, and felt from some beings unseen
The warm touch of kisses, but clean or unclean
I knew not, nor whether the love I had won
Was of heaven or hell—till one day in the sun,
In its very noon-blaze, I could fancy a thing
Of beauty, but faint as the cloud-mirrors fling
On the gaze of the shepherd that watches the sky,
Half-seen and half-dream'd in the soul of his eye.
And when in my musings I gaz'd on the stream,
In motionless trances of thought, there would seem
A face like that face, looking upward through mine ;
With its eyes full of love, and the dim-drowned shine
Of limbs and fair garments, like clouds in that blue
Serene :—there I stood for long hours but to view
Those fond earnest eyes that were ever uplifted
Towards me, and wink'd as the water-weed drifted
Between ; but the fish knew that presence, and plied
Their long curvy tails, and swift darted aside.

There I gazed for lost time, and forgot all the things
That once had been wonders—the fishes with wings,
And the glimmer of magnified eyes that look'd up
From the glooms of the bottom like pearls in a cup,
And the huge endless serpent of silvery gleam,
Slow winding along like a tide in the stream.

Some maid of the waters, some Naiad, methought
Held me dear in the pearl of her eye—and I brought
My wish to that fancy; and often I dash'd
My limbs in the water, and suddenly splash'd
The cool drops around me, yet clung to the brink,
Chill'd by watery fears, how that Beauty might sink
With my life in her arms to her garden, and bind me
With its long tangled grasses, or cruelly wind me
In some eddy to hum out my life in her ear,
Like a spider-caught bee,—and in aid of that fear
Came the tardy remembrance—Oh falsest of men!
Why was not that beauty remember'd till then?
My love, my safe love, whose glad life would have
run

Into mine—like a drop—that our fate might be one,
That now, even now,—may-be,—clasp'd in a dream,
That form which I gave to some jilt of the stream,
And gaz'd with fond eyes that her tears tried to smother
On a mock of those eyes that I gave to another!

Then I rose from the stream, but the eyes of the mind
Still full of the tempter, kept gazing behind
On her crystalline face, while I painfully leapt
To the bank, and shook off the curst waters, and wept
With my brow in the reeds; and the reeds to my ear
Bow'd, bent by no wind, and in whispers of fear,
Growing small with large secrets, foretold me of one
That loved me,—but oh to fly from her, and shun
Her love like a pest—though her love was as true
To mine as her stream to the heavenly blue;
For why should I love her with love that would bring
All misfortune, like Hate, on so joyous a thing?
Because of her rival,—even Her whose witch-face
I had slighted, and therefore was doom'd in that place
To roam, and had roam'd, where all horrors grew rank,
Nine days ere I wept with my brow on that bank;
Her name be not named, but her spite would not fail
To our love like a blight; and they told me the tale
Of Scylla, and Picus, imprison'd to speak
His shrill-screaming woe through a woodpecker's beak.

Then they ceased—I had heard as the voice of my star
That told me the truth of my fortunes—thus far
I had read of my sorrow, and lay in the bush
Of deep meditation,—when lo! a light crush
Of the reeds, and I turn'd and look'd round in the night
Of new sunshine, and saw, as I sipp'd of the light
Narrow-winking, the realized nymph of the stream,
Rising up from the wave with the bend and the gleam
Of a fountain, and o'er her white arms she kept throwing
Bright torrents of hair, that went flowing and flowing
In falls to her feet, and the blue waters roll'd
Down her limbs like a garment, in many a fold,
Sun-spangled, gold-broider'd, and fled far behind,
Like an infinite train. So she came and reclin'd
In the reeds, and I hunger'd to see her unseal
The buds of her eyes that would ope and reveal
The blue that was in them; and they ope'd, and she
rais'd

Two orbs of pure crystal, and timidly gazed
With her eyes on my eyes; but their colour and shine
Was of that which they look'd on, and mostly of mine—
For she loved me,—except when she blush'd, and they
sank,

Shame-humbled, to number the stones on the bank,
Or her play-idle fingers, while lisping she told me
How she put on her veil, and in love to behold me,
Would wing through the sun till she fainted away
Like a mist, and then flew to her waters and lay
In love-patience long hours, and sore dazzled her eyes
In watching for mine 'gainst the midsummer skies.
But now they were heal'd,—O my heart, it still dances
When I think of the charm of her changeable glances,
And my image how small when it sank in the deep
Of her eyes where her soul was,—Alas! now they weep,
And none knoweth where. In what stream do her eyes
Shed invisible tears? Who beholds where her sighs
Flow in eddies, or sees the ascent of the leaf
She has pluck'd with her tresses? Who listens her grief
Like a far fall of waters, or hears where her feet
Grow emphatic among the loose pebbles, and beat

Them together ? Ah ! surely her flowers float adown
To the sea unaccepted, and little ones drown
For need of her mercy,—even he whose twin-brother
Will miss him for ever ; and the sorrowful mother
Imploresth in vain for his body to kiss
And cling to, all dripping and cold as it is,
Because that soft pity is lost in hard pain !
We loved,—how we loved !—for I thought not again
Of the woes that were whisper'd like fears in that place
If I gave me to beauty. Her face was the face
Far away, and her eyes were the eyes that were drown'd
For my absence,—her arms were the arms that sought
round,

And clasp'd me to nought ; for I gazed and became
Only true to my falsehood, and had but one name
For two loves, and called ever on Ægle, sweet maid
Of the sky-loving waters,—and was not afraid
Of the sight of her skin ;—for it never could be
Her beauty and love were misfortunes to me !

Thus our bliss had endured for a time-shorten'd space,
Like a day made of three, and the smile of her face
Had been with me for joy,—when she told me indeed
Her love was self-task'd with a work that would need
Some short hours, for in truth 'twas the veriest pity
Our love should not last, and then sang me a ditty,
Of one with warm lips that should love her, and love her
When suns were burnt dim and long ages past over.
So she fled with her voice, and I patiently nested
My limbs in the reeds, in still quiet, and rested
Till my thoughts grew extinct, and I sank in a sleep
Of dreams,—but their meaning was hidden too deep
To be read what their woe was ;—but still it was woe
That was writ on all faces that swam to and fro
In that river of night ;—and the gaze of their eyes
Was sad,—and the bend of their brows,—and their cries
Were seen, but I heard not. The warm touch of tears
Travell'd down my cold cheeks, and I shook till my fears
Awaked me, and lo ! I was couch'd in a bower,
The growth of long summers rear'd up in an hour !

Then I said, in the fear of my dream, I will fly
From this magic, but could not, because that my eye
Grew love-idle among the rich blooms ; and the earth
Held me down with its coolness of touch, and the mirth
Of some bird was above me,—who, even in fear,
Would startle the thrush ? and methought there drew
near

A form as of Ægle,—but it was not the face
Hope made, and I knew the witch-Queen of that place,
Even Circe the Cruel, that came like a Death
Which I fear'd, and yet fled not, for want of my breath.
There was thought in her face, and her eyes were not
raised

From the grass at her foot, but I saw, as I gazed,
Her spite—and her countenance changed with her mind
As she plann'd how to thrall me with beauty, and bind
My soul to her charms,—and her long tresses play'd
From shade into shine and from shine into shade,
Like a day in mid-autumn,—first fair, O how fair !
With long snaky locks of the adderblack hair
That clung round her neck,—those dark locks that I
prize,

For the sake of a maid that once loved me with eyes
Of that fathomless hue,—but they changed as they
roll'd,

And brighten'd, and suddenly blazed into gold
That she comb'd into flames, and the locks that fell down
Turn'd dark as they fell, but I slighted their brown,
Nor loved, till I saw the light ringlets shed wild,
That innocence wears when she is but a child ;
And her eyes,—O I ne'er had been witch'd with their
shine,

Had they been any other, my Ægle, than thine !

Then I gave me to magic, and gazed till I madden'd
In the full of their light,—but I sadden'd and sadden'd
The deeper I look'd,—till I sank on the snow
Of her bosom, a thing made of terror and woe,
And answer'd its throb with the shudder of fears,
And hid my cold eyes from her eyes with my tears,

And strain'd her white arms with the still languid weight
Of a fainting distress. There she sat like the Fate
That is nurse unto Death, and bent over in shame
To hide me from her—the true Ægle—that came
With the words on her lips the false witch had foregiv'n
To make me immortal—for now I was even
At the portals of Death, who but waited the hush
Of world-sounds in my ear to cry welcome, and rush
With my soul to the banks of his black-flowing river.
O would it had flown from my body for ever,
Ere I listen'd those words, when I felt with a start,
The life blood rush back in one throb to my heart,
And saw the pale lips where the rest of that spell
Had perish'd in horror—and heard the farewell
Of that voice that was drown'd in the dash of the stream!
How fain had I follow'd, and plunged with that scream
Into death, but my being indignantly lagg'd
Through the brutalized flesh that I painfully dragg'd
Behind me:—'O Circe! O mother of Spite!
Speak the last of that curse! and imprison me quite
In the husk of a brute,—that no pity may name
The man that I was,—that no kindred may claim
The monster I am! Let me utterly be
Brute-buried, and Nature's dishonour with me
Uninscribed!—But she listen'd my prayer, that was
praise
To her malice, with smiles, and advised me to gaze
On the river for love,—and perchance she would make
In pity a maid without eyes for my sake,
And she left me like Scorn. Then I ask'd of the wave,
What monster I was, and it trembled and gave
The true shape of my grief, and I turn'd with my face
From all waters for ever, and fled through that place,
Till with horror more strong than all magic I pass'd
Its bounds, and the world was before me at last.

There I wander'd in sorrow, and shunn'd the abodes
Of men, that stood up in the likeness of Gods,
But I saw from afar the warm shine of the sun
On their cities, where man was a million, not one;

And I saw the white smoke of their altars ascending,
That show'd where the hearts of the many were blending,
And the wind in my face brought shrill voices that came
From the trumpets that gather'd whole bands in one
fame

As a chorus of man,—and they stream'd from the gates
Like a dusky libation pour'd out to the Fates.

But at times there were gentler processions of peace
That I watch'd with my soul in my eyes till their cease,
There were women ! there men ! but to me a third sex
I saw them all dots—yet I loved them as specks :

And oft to assuage a sad yearning of eyes

I stole near the city, but stole covert-wise

Like a wild beast of love, and perchance to be smitten
By some hand that I rather had wept on than bitten

Oh, I once had a haunt near a cot where a mother
Daily sat in the shade with her child, and would smother
Its eyelids in kisses, and then in its sleep

Sang dreams in its ear of its manhood, while deep

In a thicket of willows I gazed o'er the brooks

That murmur'd between us and kiss'd them with looks ;

But the willows unbosom'd their secret, and never

I return'd to a spot I had startled for ever,

Though I oft long'd to know, but could ask it of none,

Was the mother still fair, and how big was her son ?

For the haunters of fields they all shunn'd me by
flight,

The men in their horror, the women in fright ;

None ever remain'd save a child once that sported

Among the wild bluebells, and playfully courted

The breeze ; and beside him a speckled snake lay

Tight strangled, because it had hiss'd him away

From the flow'r at his finger ; he rose and drew near

Like a Son of Immortals, one born to no fear,

But with strength of black locks and with eyes azure
bright

To grow to large manhood of merciful might.

He came, with his face of bold wonder, to feel

The hair of my side, and to lift up my heel,

And question'd my face with wide eyes; but when under
My lids he saw tears,—for I wept at his wonder,
He stroked me, and utter'd such kindliness then,
That the once love of women, the friendship of men
In past sorrow, no kindness e'er came like a kiss
On my heart in its desolate day such a this!
And I yearn'd at his cheeks in my love, and down bent,
And lifted him up in my arms with intent
To kiss him,—but he cruel-kindly, alas!
Held out to my lips a pluck'd handful of grass!
Then I dropt him in horror, but felt as I fled
The stone he indignantly hurl'd at my head,
That dissever'd my ear,—but I felt not, whose fate
Was to meet more distress in his love than his hate!

Thus I wander'd, companion'd of grief and forlorn,
Till I wish'd for that land where my being was born,
But what was that land with its love, where my home
Was self-shut against me; for why should I come
Like an after-distress to my grey-bearded father,
With a blight to the last of his sight?—let him rather
Lament for me dead, and shed tears in the urn
Where I was not, and still in fond memory turn
To his son even such as he left him. Oh, how
Could I walk with the youth once my fellows, but now
Like Gods to my humbled estate?—or how bear
The steeds once the pride of my eyes and the care
Of my hands? Then I turn'd me self-banish'd, and
came

Into Thessaly here, where I met with the same
As myself. I have heard how they met by a stream
In games, and were suddenly changed by a scream
That made wretches of many, as she roll'd her wild eyes
Against heav'n, and so vanish'd.—The gentle and wise
Lose their thoughts in deep studies, and others their ill
In the mirth of mankind where they mingle them still.

THE TWO PEACOCKS OF BEDFONT

ALAS! that breathing Vanity should go
 Where Pride is buried,—like its very ghost,
 Uprisen from the naked bones below,
 In novel flesh, clad in the silent boast
 Of gaudy silk that flutters to and fro,
 Shedding its chilling superstition most
 On young and ignorant natures—as it wont
 To haunt the peaceful churchyard of Bedfont!
 Each Sabbath morning, at the hour of prayer,
 Behold two maidens, up the quiet green
 Shining, far distant in the summer air
 That flaunts their dewy robes and breathes between
 Their downy plumes,—sailing as if they were
 Two far-off ships,—until they brush between
 The churchyard's humble walls, and watch and wait
 On either side of the wide open'd gate.
 And there they stand—with haughty necks before
 God's holy house, that points towards the skies—
 Frowning reluctant duty from the poor,
 And tempting homage from unthoughtful eyes:
 And Youth looks lingering from the temple door,
 Breathing its wishes in unfruitful sighs,
 With pouting lips,—forgetful of the grace,
 Of health, and smiles, on the heart-conscious face;—
 Because that Wealth, which has no bliss beside,
 May wear the happiness of rich attire;
 And those two sisters, in their silly pride,
 May change the soul's warm glances for the fire
 Of lifeless diamonds;—and for health deny'd,—
 With art, that blushes at itself, inspire
 Their languid cheeks—and flourish in a glory
 That has no life in life, nor after-story.
 The aged priest goes shaking his grey hair
 In meekest censuring, and turns his eye
 Earthward in grief, and heavenward in pray'r,
 And sighs, and clasps his hands, and passes by.

Good-hearted man ! what sullen soul would wear
 Thy sorrow for a garb, and constantly
 Put on thy censure, that might win the praise
 Of one so grey in goodness and in days ?

Also the solemn clerk partakes the shame
 Of this ungodly shine of human pride,
 And sadly blends his reverence and blame
 In one grave bow, and passes with a stride
 Impatient :—many a red-hooded dame
 Turns her pain'd head, but not her glance, aside
 From wanton dress, and marvels o'er again,
 That heaven hath no wet judgments for the vain.

'I have a lily in the bloom at home,'
 Quoth one, 'and by the blessed Sabbath day
 I'll pluck my lily in its pride, and come
 And read a lesson upon vain array ;—
 And when stiff silks are rustling up, and some
 Give place, I'll shake it in proud eyes and say—
 Making my reverence,—“Ladies, an' you please,
 King Solomon's not half so fine as these.”'

Then her meek partner, who has nearly run
 His earthly course,—'Nay, Goody, let your text
 Grow in the garden.—We have only one—
 Who knows that these dim eyes may see the next ?
 Summer will come again, and summer sun,
 And lilies too,—but I were sorely vexed
 To mar my garden, and cut short the blow
 Of the last lily I may live to grow.'

'The last !' quoth she, 'and though the last it were—
 Lo ! those two wantons, where they stand so proud
 With waving plumes, and jewels in their hair,
 And painted cheeks, like Dragons to be bow'd
 And curtsey'd to !—last Sabbath after pray'r,
 I heard the little Tomkins ask aloud
 If they were angels—but I made him know
 God's bright ones better, with a bitter blow !'

So speaking, they pursue the pebbly walk
 That leads to the white porch the Sunday throng,
 Hand-coupled urchins in restrained talk,
 And anxious pedagogue that chastens wrong,
 And posied churchwarden with solemn stalk,
 And gold-bedizen'd beadle flames along,
 And gentle peasant clad in buff and green,
 Like a meek cowslip in the spring serene ;

And blushing maiden—modestly array'd
 In spotless white,—still conscious of the glass ;
 And she, the lonely widow, that hath made
 A sable covenant with grief,—alas !
 She veils her tears under the deep, deep shade,
 While the poor kindly-hearted, as they pass,
 Bend to unclouded childhood, and caress
 Her boy,—so rosy !—and so fatherless !

Thus, as good Christians ought, they all draw near
 The fair white temple to the timely call
 Of pleasant bells that tremble in the ear.—
 Now the last frock, and scarlet hood, and shawl
 Fade into dusk, in the dim atmosphere
 Of the low porch, and heav'n has won them all,
 —Saving those two, that turn aside and pass
 In velvet blossom, where all flesh is grass.

Ah me ! to see their silken manors trail'd
 In purple luxuries—with restless gold,—
 Flaunting the grass where widowhood has wail'd
 In blotted black,—over the heapy mould
 Panting wave-wantonly ! They never quail'd
 How the warm vanity abused the cold ;
 Nor saw the solemn faces of the gone
 Sadly uplooking through transparent stone :

But swept their dwellings with unquiet light,
 Shocking the awful presence of the dead ;
 Where gracious natures would their eyes benight,
 Nor wear their being with a lip too red,

Nor move too rudely in the summer bright
 Of sun, but put staid sorrow in their tread,
 Meting it into steps, with inward breath,
 In very pity to bereaved death.

Now in the church, time-sober'd minds resign
 To solemn pray'r, and the loud chaunted hymn,—
 With glowing picturings of joys divine
 Painting the mistlight where the roof is dim ;
 But youth looks upward to the window shine,
 Warming with rose and purple and the swim
 Of gold, as if thought-tinted by the stains
 Of gorgeous light through many-colour'd panes ;

Soiling the virgin snow wherein God hath
 Enrobed his angels,—and with absent eyes
 Hearing of Heav'n, and its directed path,
 Thoughtful of slippers,—and the glorious skies
 Clouding with satin,—till the preacher's wrath
 Consumes his pity, and he glows and cries,
 With a deep voice that trembles in its might,
 And earnest eyes grown eloquent in light :

' O that the vacant eye would learn to look
 On very beauty, and the heart embrace
 True loveliness, and from this holy book
 Drink the warm-breathing tenderness and grace
 Of love indeed ! O that the young soul took
 Its virgin passion from the glorious face
 Of fair religion, and address'd its strife,
 To win the riches of eternal life !

' Doth the vain heart love glory that is none,
 And the poor excellence of vain attire ?
 O go, and drown your eyes against the sun,
 The visible ruler of the starry quire,
 Till boiling gold in giddy eddies run,
 Dazzling the brain with orbs of living fire ;
 And the faint soul down darkens into night,
 And dies a burning martyrdom to light.

‘O go, and gaze,—when the low winds of ev’n
 Breathe hymns, and Nature’s many forests nod
 Their gold-crown’d heads; and the rich blooms of heav’n
 Sun-ripen’d give their blushes up to God;
 And mountain-rocks and cloudy steeps are riv’n
 By founts of fire, as smitten by the rod
 Of heavenly Moses,—that your thirsty sense
 May quench its longings of magnificence !

‘Yet suns shall perish—stars shall fade away—
 Day into darkness—darkness into death—
 Death into silence ; the warm light of day,
 The blooms of summer, the rich glowing breath
 Of even—all shall wither and decay,
 Like the frail furniture of dreams beneath
 The touch of morn—or bubbles of rich dyes
 That break and vanish in the aching eyes.’

They hear, soul-blushing, and repentant shed
 Unwholesome thoughts in wholesome tears, and pour
 Their sin to earth,—and with low drooping head
 Receive the solemn blessing, and implore
 Its grace—then soberly with chasten’d tread,
 They meekly press towards the gusty door,
 With humbled eyes that go to graze upon
 The lowly grass—like him of Babylon.

The lowly grass :—O water-constant mind !
 Fast-ebbing holiness !—soon-fading grace
 Of serious thought, as if the gushing wind
 Through the low porch had wash’d it from the face
 For ever !—How they lift their eyes to find
 Old vanities.—Pride wins the very place
 Of meekness, like a bird, and flutters now
 With idle wings on the curl-conscious brow !

And lo ! with eager looks they seek the way
 Of old temptation at the lowly gate ;
 To feast on feathers, and on vain array,
 And painted cheeks, and the rich glistening state

Of jewel-sprinkled locks.—But where are they,

The graceless haughty ones that used to wait
With lofty neck, and nods, and stiffen'd eye?—
None challenge the old homage bending by.

In vain they look for the ungracious bloom

Of rich apparel where it glowed before,—
For Vanity has faded all to gloom,

And lofty Pride has stiffen'd to the core,
For impious Life to tremble at its doom,—

Set for a warning token evermore,
Whereon, as now, the giddy and the wise
Shall gaze with lifted hands and wond'ring eyes.

The aged priest goes on each sabbath morn,

But shakes not sorrow under his grey hair ;

The solemn clerk goes lavender'd and shorn,

Nor stoops his back to the ungodly pair ;—

And ancient lips that pucker'd up in scorn,

Go smoothly breathing to the house of pray'r ;

And in the garden-plot from day to day,

The lily blooms its long white life away.

And where two haughty maidens used to be,

In pride of plume, where plummy Death had trod,

Trailing their gorgeous velvets wantonly,

Most unmeet pall, over the holy sod ;—

There, gentle stranger, thou may'st only see

Two sombre Peacocks.—Age, with sapient nod

Marking the spot, still tarries to declare

How they once lived, and wherefore they are there.

A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW

Oh, when I was a tiny boy
 My days and nights were full of joy,
 My mates were blithe and kind!—
 No wonder that I sometimes sigh,
 And dash the tear-drop from my eye,
 To cast a look behind!

A hoop was an eternal round
 Of pleasure. In those days I found
 A top a joyous thing;—
 But now those past delights I drop,
 My head, alas! is all my top,
 And careful thoughts the string!

My marbles—once my bag was stor'd,—
 Now I must play with Elgin's lord,
 With Theseus for a taw!
 My playful horse has slipt his string,
 Forgotten all his capering,
 And harness'd to the law!

My kite—how fast and far it flew!
 Whilst I, a sort of Franklin, drew
 My pleasure from the sky!
 'Twas paper'd o'er with studious themes,
 The tasks I wrote—my present dreams
 Will never soar so high!

My joys are wingless all and dead;
 My dumps are made of more than lead;
 My flights soon find a fall;
 My fears prevail, my fancies droop,
 Joy never cometh with a hoop,
 And seldom with a call!

My football's laid upon the shelf;
 I am a shuttlecock myself
 The world knocks to and fro;—
 My archery is all unlearn'd,
 And grief against myself has turned
 My arrows and my bow!

No more in noontide sun I bask ;
My authorship's an endless task,
My head's ne'er out of school :
My heart is pain'd with scorn and slight,
I have too many foes to fight,
And friends grown strangely cool !

The very chum that shared my cake
Holds out so cold a hand to shake,
It makes me shrink and sigh :—
On this I will not dwell and hang,
The changeling would not feel a pang
Though these should meet his eye !

No skies so blue or so serene
As then ;—no leaves look half so green
As cloth'd the play-ground tree !
All things I lov'd are alter'd so,
Nor does it ease my heart to know
That change resides in me !

O, for the garb that mark'd the boy,
The trowsers made of corduroy,
Well ink'd with black and red ;
The crownless hat, ne'er deem'd an ill—
It only let the sunshine still
Repose upon my head !

O, for the riband round the neck !
The careless dog's-ears apt to deck
My book and collar both !
How can this formal man be styled
Merely an Alexandrine child,
A boy of larger growth ?

O, for that small, small beer anew !
And (heaven's own type) that mild sky-blue
That wash'd my sweet meals down ;
The master even !—and that small Turk
That fagg'd me !—worse is now my work—
A fag for all the town !

O, for the lessons learn'd by heart !
Ay, though the very birch's smart
Should mark those hours again ;
I'd 'kiss the rod,' and be resign'd
Beneath the stroke, and even find
Some sugar in the cane !

The Arabian Nights rehears'd in bed !
The Fairy Tales in school-time read,
By stealth, 'twixt verb and noun !
The angel form that always walk'd
In all my dreams, and look'd and talk'd
Exactly like Miss Brown !

The *omne bene*—Christmas come !
The prize of merit, won for home —
Merit had prizes then !
But now I write for days and days,
For fame—a deal of empty praise,
Without the silver pen !

Then home, sweet home ! the crowded coach—
The joyous shout—the loud approach—
The winding horns like rams' !
The meeting sweet that made me thrill,
The sweetmeats almost sweeter still,
No 'satis' to the 'jams !'—

When that I was a tiny boy
My days and nights were full of joy,
My mates were blithe and kind !
No wonder that I sometimes sigh,
And dash the tear-drop from my eye,
To cast a look behind !

FAIR INES

O saw ye not fair Ines ?
 She's gone into the West,
 To dazzle when the sun is down,
 And rob the world of rest :
 She took our daylight with her,
 The smiles that we love best,
 With morning blushes on her cheek,
 And pearls upon her breast.

O turn again, fair Ines,
 Before the fall of night,
 For fear the Moon should shine alone,
 And stars unrivall'd bright ;
 And blessed will the lover be
 That walks beneath their light,
 And breathes the love against thy cheek
 I dare not even write !

Would I had been, fair Ines,
 That gallant cavalier,
 Who rode so gaily by thy side,
 And whisper'd thee so near !—
 Were there no bonny dames at home
 Or no true lovers here,
 That he should cross the seas to win
 The dearest of the dear ?

I saw thee, lovely Ines,
 Descend along the shore,
 With bands of noble gentlemen,
 And banners wav'd before ;
 And gentle youth and maidens gay,
 And snowy plumes they wore ;—
 It would have been a beauteous dream,
 —If it had been no more !

Alas, alas, fair Ines,
 She went away with song,
 With Music waiting on her steps,
 And shoutings of the throng ;

But some were sad, and felt no mirth,
But only Music's wrong,
In sounds that sang Farewell, Farewell,
To her you've loved so long.

Farewell, farewell, fair Ines,
That vessel never bore
So fair a lady on its deck,
Nor danc'd so light before,—
Alas for pleasure on the sea,
And sorrow on the shore !
'The smile that blest one lover's heart
Has broken many more !

ODE: AUTUMN

I SAW old Autumn in the misty morn
Stand shadowless like Silence, listening
To silence, for no lonely bird would sing
Into his hollow ear from woods forlorn,
Nor lowly hedge nor solitary thorn ;—
Shaking his languid locks all dewy bright
With tangled gossamer that fell by night,
Pearling his coronet of golden corn.

Where are the songs of Summer ?—With the sun,
Oping the dusky eyelids of the south,
Till shade and silence waken up as one,
And Morning sings with a warm odorous mouth,
Where are the merry birds ?—Away, away,
On panting wings through the inclement skies,
Lest owls should prey
Undazzled at noon-day,
And tear with horny beak their lustrous eyes.

Where are the blooms of Summer ?—In the west,
Blushing their last to the last sunny hours,
When the mild Eve by sudden Night is prest
Like tearful Proserpine, snatch'd from her flow'rs
To a most gloomy breast.

Where is the pride of Summer,—the green pine,—
The many, many leaves all twinkling?—Three
On the moss'd elm; three on the naked lime
Trembling,—and one upon the old oak tree!

Where is the Dryads' immortality?—
Gone into mournful cypress and dark yew,
Or wearing the long gloomy Winter through
In the smooth holly's green eternity.

The squirrel gloats on his accomplish'd hoard,
The ants have brimm'd their garner with ripe grain,
And honey bees have stor'd

The sweets of Summer in their luscious cells;
The swallows all have wing'd across the main;
But here the Autumn melancholy dwells,
And sighs her tearful spells

Amongst the sunless shadows of the plain.

Alone, alone,

Upon a mossy stone,

She sits and reckons up the dead and gone
With the last leaves for a love-rosary,
Whilst all the wither'd world looks drearily,
Like a dim picture of the drowned past
In the hush'd mind's mysterious far away,
Doubtful what ghostly thing will steal the last
Into that distance, grey upon the grey.

O go and sit with her, and be o'ershaded

Under the languid downfall of her hair:

She wears a coronal of flowers faded

Upon her forehead, and a face of care;—

There is enough of wither'd every where

To make her bower,—and enough of gloom;

There is enough of sadness to invite,

If only for the rose that died,—whose doom

Is Beauty's,—she that with the living bloom

Of conscious cheeks most beautifies the light;—

There is enough of sorrowing, and quite

Enough of bitter fruits the earth doth bear,—

Enough of chilly droppings for her bowl;

Enough of fear and shadowy despair,

To frame her cloudy prison for the soul!

BALLAD

SPRING it is cheery,
 Winter is dreary,
 Green leaves hang, but the brown must fly;
 When he's forsaken,
 Wither'd and shaken
 What can an old man do but die?

Love will not clip him,
 Maids will not lip him,
 Maud and Marian pass him by;
 Youth it is sunny,
 Age has no honey,—
 What can an old man do but die?

June it was jolly,
 O for its folly!
 A dancing leg and a laughing eye;
 Youth may be silly,
 Wisdom is chilly,—
 What can an old man do but die?

Friends, they are scanty,
 Beggars are plenty,
 If he has followers, I know why;
 Gold's in his clutches,
 (Buying him crutches!)—
 What can an old man do but die?

TO A COLD BEAUTY

LADY, wouldst thou heiress be
 To Winter's cold and cruel part?
 When he sets the rivers free
 Thou dost still lock up thy heart;—
 Thou that shouldst outlast the snow,
 But in the whiteness of thy brow,

Scorn and cold neglect are made
For winter gloom and winter wind,
But thou wilt wrong the summer air,
Breathing it to words unkind,—
Breath which only should belong
To love, to sunlight, and to song !

When the little buds uncloze,
Red, and white, and pied, and blue,
And that virgin flow'r, the rose,
Opes her heart to hold the dew,
Wilt thou lock thy bosom up
With no jewel in its cup ?

Let not cold December sit
Thus in Love's peculiar throne ;—
Brooklets are not prison'd now,
But crystal frosts are all agone,
And that which hangs upon the spray,
It is no snow, but flow'r of May !

RUTH

SHE stood breast high amid the corn,
Clasp'd by the golden light of morn,
Like the sweetheart of the sun,
Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush,
Deeply ripened ;—such a blush
In the midst of brown was born,
Like red poppies grown with corn.

Round her eyes her tresses fell,
Which were blackest none could tell,
But long lashes veil'd a light,
That had else been all too bright.

And her hat, with shady brim,
 Made her tressy forehead dim ;—
 Thus she stood amid the stooks,
 Praising God with sweetest looks :—

Sure, I said, heav'n did not mean,
 Where I reap thou shouldst but glean,
 Lay thy sheaf adown and come,
 Share my harvest and my home.

THE SEA OF DEATH

A FRAGMENT

—METHOUGHT I saw

Life swiftly treading over endless space ;
 And, at her foot-print, but a bygone pace,
 The ocean-past, which, with increasing wave,
 Swallow'd her steps like a pursuing grave.
 Sad were my thoughts that anchor'd silently
 On the dead waters of that passionless sea,
 Unstirr'd by any touch of living breath :
 Silence hung over it, and drowsy Death,
 Like a gorged sea-bird, slept with folded wings
 On crowded carcasses—sad passive things
 That wore the thin grey surface, like a veil
 Over the calmness of their features pale.

And there were spring-faced cherubs that did sleep
 Like water-lilies on that motionless deep,
 How beautiful ! with bright unruffled hair
 On sleek unfretted brows, and eyes that were
 Buried in marble tombs, a pale eclipse !
 And smile-bedimpled cheeks, and pleasant lips,
 Meekly apart, as if the soul intense
 Spake out in dreams of its own innocence :
 And so they lay in loveliness, and kept
 The birth-night of their peace, that Life e'en wept
 With very envy of their happy fronts ;
 For there were neighbour brows scarr'd by the brunts
 Of strife and sorrowing—where Care had set
 His crooked autograph, and marr'd the jet

Of glossy, locks with hollow eyes forlorn,
And lips that curl'd in bitterness and scorn—
Wretched,—as they had breathed of this world's pain,
And so bequeath'd it to the world again
Through the beholder's heart in heavy sighs.

So lay they garmented in torpid light,
Under the pall of a transparent night,
Like solemn apparitions lull'd sublime
To everlasting rest,—and with them Time
Slept, as he sleeps upon the silent face
Of a dark dial in a sunless place.

BALLAD

SHE's up and gone, the graceless Girl!

And robb'd my failing years;
My blood before was thin and cold
But now 'tis turn'd to tears;—
My shadow falls upon my grave,
So near the brink I stand,
She might have staid a little yet,
And led me by the hand!

Aye, call her on the barren moor,
And call her on the hill,
'Tis nothing but the heron's cry,
And plovers answer shrill;
My child is flown on wilder wings,
Than they have ever spread,
And I may even walk a waste
That widen'd when she fled.

Full many a thankless child has been,
But never one like mine;
Her meat was served on plates of gold,
Her drink was rosy wine;
But now she'll share the robin's food,
And sup the common rill,
Before her feet will turn again
To meet her father's will!

I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER

I REMEMBER, I remember,
 The house where I was born,
 The little window where the sun
 Came peeping in at morn;
 He never came a wink too soon,
 Nor brought too long a day,
 But now, I often wish the night
 Had borne my breath away!

I remember, I remember,
 The roses, red and white,
 The vi'lets, and the lily-cups,
 Those flowers made of light!
 The lilacs where the robin built,
 And where my brother set
 The laburnum on his birthday,—
 The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember,
 Where I was used to swing,
 And thought the air must rush as fresh
 To swallows on the wing;
 My spirit flew in feathers then,
 That is so heavy now,
 And summer pools could hardly cool
 The fever on my brow!

I remember, I remember,
 The fir trees dark and high;
 I used to think their slender tops
 Were close against the sky:
 It was a childish ignorance,
 But now 'tis little joy
 To know I'm farther off from heav'n
 Than when I was a boy.

TO AN ABSENTEE

O'ER hill, and dale, and distant sea,
 Through all the miles that stretch between,
 My thought must fly to rest on thee,
 And would, though worlds should intervene.
 Nay, thou art now so dear, methinks
 The farther we are forc'd apart,
 Affection's firm elastic links
 But bind the closer round the heart.
 For now we sever each from each,
 I learn what I have lost in thee;
 Alas! that nothing less could teach,
 How great indeed my love should be!
 Farewell! I did not know thy worth,
 But thou art gone, and now 'tis priz'd:
 So angels walk'd unknown on earth,
 But when they flew were recogniz'd!

SONG

THE stars are with the voyager
 Wherever he may sail;
 The moon is constant to her time;
 The sun will never fail;
 But follow, follow round the world,
 The green earth and the sea;
 So love is with the lover's heart,
 Wherever he may be.

Wherever he may be, the stars
 Must daily lose their light;
 The moon will veil her in the shade;
 The sun will set at night.
 The sun may set, but constant love
 Will shine when he's away;
 So that dull night is never night,
 And day is brighter day.

ODE TO THE MOON

MOTHER of light ! how fairly dost thou go
 Over those hoary crests, divinely led !—
 Art thou that huntress of the silver bow
 Fabled of old ? Or rather dost thou tread
 Those cloudy summits thence to gaze below,
 Like the wild Chamois from her Alpine snow,
 Where hunter never climb'd,—secure from dread ?
 How many antique fancies have I read
 Of that mild presence ! and how many wrought !

Wondrous and bright,

Upon the silver light,

Chasing fair figures with the artist, Thought !

What art thou like ? Sometimes I see thee ride
 A far-bound galley on its perilous way,
 Whilst breezy waves toss up their silvery spray ;—

Sometimes behold thee glide,

Cluster'd by all thy family of stars,

Like a lone widow, through the welkin wide,

Whose pallid cheek the midnight sorrow mars ;—

Sometimes I watch thee on from steep to steep,

Timidly lighted by thy vestal torch,

Till in some Latmian cave I see thee creep,

To catch the young Endymion asleep,—

Leaving thy splendour at the jagged porch !—

Oh, thou art beautiful, howe'er it be !

Huntress, or Dian, or whatever nam'd ;

And he, the veriest Pagan, that first fram'd

A silver idol, and ne'er worshipp'd thee !—

It is too late, or thou should'st have my knee ;

Too late now for the old Ephesian vows,

And not divine the crescent on thy brows !—

Yet, call thee nothing but the mere mild Moon,

Behind those chestnut boughs,

Casting their dappled shadows at my feet ;

I will be grateful for that simple boon,

In many a thoughtful verse and anthem sweet,

And bless thy dainty face whene'er we meet.

In nights far gone,—ay, far away and dead,—
 Before Care-fretted with a lidless eye,—
 I was thy wooer on my little bed,
 Letting the early hours of rest go by,
 To see thee flood the heaven with milky light,
 And feed thy snow-white swans, before I slept;
 For thou wert then purveyor of my dreams,—
 Thou wert the fairies' armourer, that kept
 Their burnish'd helms, and crowns, and corslets bright,
 Their spears, and glittering mails;
 And ever thou didst spill in winding streams
 Sparkles and midnight gleams,
 For fishes to new gloss their argent scales!—
 Why sighs?—why creeping tears?—why clasped
 hands?—

Is it to count the boy's expended dow'r?
 That fairies since have broke their gifted wands?
 That young Delight, like any o'erblown flow'r,
 Gave, one by one, its sweet leaves to the ground?—
 Why then, fair Moon, for all thou mark'st no hour,
 Thou art a sadder dial to old Time

 Than ever I have found
 On sunny garden-plot, or moss-grown tow'r,
 Motto'd with stern and melancholy rhyme.
 Why should I grieve for this?—O I must yearn,
 Whilst Time, conspirator with Memory,
 Keeps his cold ashes in an ancient urn,
 Richly emboss'd with childhood's revelry,
 With leaves and cluster'd fruits, and flowers eterne,—
 (Eternal to the world, though not to me,)
 Aye there will those brave sports and blossoms be,
 The deathless wreath, and undecay'd festoon,

 When I am hears'd within,—
 Less than the pallid primrose to the Moon,
 That now she watches through a vapour thin.

So let it be:—Before I liv'd to sigh,
 Thou wert in Avon, and a thousand rills,
 Beautiful Orb! and so, whene'er I lie
 Trodden, thou wilt be gazing from thy hills.

Blest be thy loving light, where'er it spills,
And blessed thy fair face, O Mother mild !
Still shine, the soul of rivers as they run,
Still lend thy lonely lamp to lovers fond,
And blend their plighted shadows into one :—
Still smile at even on the bedded child,
And close his eyelids with thy silver wand !

TO ———

WELCOME, dear Heart, and a most kind good-morrow ;
The day is gloomy, but our looks shall shine :—
Flow'rs I have none to give thee, but I borrow
Their sweetness in a verse to speak for thine.

Here are red roses, gather'd at thy cheeks,—
The white were all too happy to look white :
For love the rose, for faith the lily speaks ;
It withers in false hands, but here 'tis bright !

Dost love sweet Hyacinth ? Its scented leaf
Curls manifold,—all love's delights blow double :
'Tis said this flow'ret is inscribed with grief,—
But let that hint of a forgotten trouble.

I pluck'd the Primrose at night's dewy noon ;
Like Hope, it show'd its blossoms in the night ;—
'Twas, like Endymion, watching for the Moon !
And here are Sun-flowers, amorous of light !

These golden Buttercups are April's seal,—
The Daisy stars her constellations be :
These grew so lowly, I was forced to kneel,
Therefore I pluck no Daisies but for thee !

Here's Daisies for the morn, Primrose for gloom,
Pansies and Roses for the noontide hours :—
A wight once made a dial of their bloom,—
So may thy life be measur'd out by flow'rs !

THE FORSAKEN

THE dead are in their silent graves,
 And the dew is cold above,
 And the living weep and sigh,
 Over dust that once was love.

Once I only wept the dead,
 But now the living cause my pain :
 How couldst thou steal me from my tears,
 To leave me to my tears again ?

My Mother rests beneath the sod,—
 Her rest is calm and very deep :
 I wish'd that she could see our loves,—
 But now I gladden in her sleep.

Last night unbound my raven locks,
 The morning saw them turn'd to gray,
 Once they were black and well-belov'd,
 But thou art chang'd,—and so are they !

The useless lock I gave thee once,
 To gaze upon and think of me,
 Was ta'en with smiles,—but this was torn
 In sorrow that I send to thee !

ODE TO MELANCHOLY

COME, let us set our careful breasts,
 Like Philomel, against the thorn,
 To aggravate the inward grief,
 That makes her accents so forlorn ;
 The world has many cruel points,
 Whereby our bosoms have been torn,
 And there are dainty themes of grief,
 In sadness to outlast the morn,—
 True honour's dearth, affection's death,
 Neglectful pride, and cankering scorn,
 With all the piteous tales that tears
 Have water'd since the world was born.

The world !—it is a wilderness,
Where tears are hung on every tree ;
For thus my gloomy phantasy
Makes all things weep with me !
Come let us sit and watch the sky,
And fancy clouds, where no clouds be ;
Grief is enough to blot the eye,
And make heav'n black with misery.
Why should birds sing such merry notes,
Unless they were more blest than we ?
No sorrow ever chokes their throats,
Except sweet nightingale ; for she
Was born to pain our hearts the more
With her sad melody.
Why shines the sun except that he
Makes gloomy nooks for Grief to hide,
And pensive shades for Melancholy,
When all the earth is bright beside ?
Let clay wear smiles, and green grass wave,
Mirth shall not win us back again,
Whilst man is made of his own grave,
And fairest clouds but gilded rain !

I saw my mother in her shroud,
Her cheek was cold and very pale ;
And ever since I've looked on all
As creatures doom'd to fail !
Why do buds ope, except to die ?
Ay, let us watch the roses wither,
And think of our loves' cheeks ;
And oh, how quickly time doth fly
To bring death's winter hither !
Minutes, hours, days, and weeks,
Months, years, and ages shrink to nought ;
An age past is but a thought !

Ay, let us think of Him a while,
That, with a coffin for a boat,
Rows daily o'er the Stygian moat,
And for our table choose a tomb :

There's dark enough in any skull
To charge with black a raven plume ;
And for the saddest funeral thoughts
A winding sheet hath ample room,
Where Death, with his keen-pointed style,
Hath writ the common doom.
How wide the yew tree spreads its gloom,
And o'er the dead lets fall its dew,
As if in tears it wept for them,
The many human families
That sleep around its stem !

How cold the dead have made these stones,
With natural drops kept ever wet !
Lo ! here the best, the worst, the world
Doth now remember or forget,
Are in one common ruin hurl'd,
And love and hate are calmly met ;
The loveliest eyes that ever shone,
The fairest hands, and locks of jet.
Is't not enough to vex our souls,
And fill our eyes, that we have set
Our love upon a rose's leaf,
Our hearts upon a violet ?
Blue eyes, red cheeks, are frailer yet ;
And, sometimes, at their swift decay
Beforehand we must fret :
The roses bud and bloom again ;
But love may haunt the grave of love,
And watch the mould in vain.

O clasp me, sweet, whilst thou art mine,
And do not take my tears amiss ;
For tears must flow to wash away
A thought that shows so stern as this :
Forgive, if sometime I forget,
In woe to come, the present bliss.
As frightened Proserpine let fall
Her flowers at the sight of Dis,

Ev'n so the dark and bright will kiss,
The sunniest things throw sternest shade,
And there is ev'n a happiness
That makes the heart afraid !

Now let us with a spell invoke
The full-orb'd moon to grieve our eyes ;
Not bright, not bright, but, with a cloud
Lapp'd all about her, let her rise
All pale and dim, as if from rest
The ghost of the late buried sun
Had crept into the skies.
The Moon ! she is the source of sighs,
The very face to make us sad ;
If but to think in other times
The same calm quiet look she had,
As if the world held nothing base,
Of vile and mean, of fierce and bad ;
The same fair light that shone in streams,
The fairy lamp that charm'd the lad ;
For so it is, with spent delights
She taunts men's brains, and makes them mad.
All things are touch'd with Melancholy,
Born of the secret soul's mistrust,
To feel her fair ethereal wings
Weigh'd down with vile degraded dust ;
Even the bright extremes of joy
Bring on conclusions of disgust,
Like the sweet blossoms of the May,
Whose fragrance ends in must.
O give her, then, her tribute just,
Her sighs and tears, and musings holy !
There is no music in the life
That sounds with idiot laughter solely ;
There's not a string attun'd to mirth,
But has its chord in Melancholy.

SONNETS

TO MY DEAR MARIANNE

THIS FIRST SONNET

IF kindly words could warm th' unkindly air
 To summer clemency, that there might be
 A constant atmosphere of love with thee,
 Won by a constancy of tender care,—
 Then thy most delicate cheek should ever wear
 An exquisite blush, red-ripening to the glee
 Of cheerful lips; and my contentment see
 Its wish so recognised and written there;
 So much my bosom clings to thee and feels
 A painful echo of thy bosom pains;
 The patient paleness of thy cheek so steals
 With more than chill of Winter to my veins;
 And conscious sympathy of blood reveals
 The tender Brother-hood that now obtains!

WRITTEN IN A VOLUME OF SHAKESPEARE

How bravely Autumn paints upon the sky
 The gorgeous fame of Summer which is fled!
 Hues of all flow'rs that in their ashes lie,
 Trophied in that fair light whereon they fed,
 Tulip, and hyacinth, and sweet rose red,—
 Like exhalations from the leafy mould,
 Look here how honour glorifies the dead,
 And warms their scutcheons with a glance of gold!—
 Such is the memory of poets old,
 Who on Parnassus' hill have bloom'd elate;
 Now they are laid under their marbles cold,
 And turn'd to clay, whereof they were create;
 But God Apollo hath them all enroll'd,
 And blazon'd on the very clouds of fate!

TO FANCY

Most delicate Ariel! submissive thing,
 Won by the mind's high magic to its hest,—

Invisible embassy, or secret guest,—
Weighing the light air on a lighter wing ;—
Whether into the midnight moon, to bring
Illuminate visions to the eye of rest,—
Or rich romances from the florid West,—
Or to the sea, for mystic whispering,—
Still by thy charm'd allegiance to the will,
The fruitful wishes prosper in the brain,
As by the fingering of fairy skill,—
Moonlight, and waters, and soft music's strain,
Odours, and blooms, and *my* Miranda's smile,
Making this dull world an enchanted isle.

TO AN ENTHUSIAST

YOUNG ardent soul, graced with fair Nature's truth
Spring warmth of heart, and fervency of mind,
And still a large late love of all thy kind,
Spite of the world's cold practice and Time's tooth,—
For all these gifts, I know not, in fair sooth,
Whether to give thee joy, or bid thee blind
Thine eyes with tears,—that thou hast not resign'd
The passionate fire and freshness of thy youth :
For as the current of thy life shall flow,
Gilded by shine of sun or shadow-stain'd,
Through flow'ry valley or unwholesome fen,
Thrice blessed in thy joy, or in thy woe
Thrice cursed of thy race,—thou art ordain'd
To share beyond the lot of common men.

It is not death, that sometime in a sigh
This eloquent breath shall take its speechless flight ;
That sometime these bright stars, that now reply
In sunlight to the sun, shall set in night ;
That this warm conscious flesh shall perish quite,
And all life's ruddy springs forget to flow ;
That thoughts shall cease, and the immortal spright
Be lapp'd in alien clay and laid below ;
It is not death to know this,—but to know

That pious thoughts, which visit at new graves
In tender pilgrimage, will cease to go
So duly and so oft,—and when grass waves
Over the past-away, there may be then
No resurrection in the minds of men.

By ev'ry sweet tradition of true hearts,
Graven by Time, in love with his own lore ;
By all old martyrdoms and antique smarts,
Wherein Love died to be alive the more ;
Yea, by the sad impression on the shore,
Left by the drown'd Leander, to endear
That coast for ever, where the billow's roar
Moaneth for pity in the Poet's ear ;
By Hero's faith, and the foreboding tear
That quench'd her brand's last twinkle in its fall ;
By Sappho's leap, and the low rustling fear
That sigh'd around her flight ; I swear by all,
The world shall find such pattern in my act,
As if Love's great examples still were lack'd.

ON RECEIVING A GIFT

Look how the golden ocean shines above
Its pebbly stones, and magnifies their girth ;
So does the bright and blessed light of love
Its own things glorify, and raise their worth.
As weeds seem flowers beneath the flattering brine,
And stones like gems, and gems as gems indeed,
Even so our tokens shine ; nay, they outshine
Pebbles and pearls, and gems and coral weed ;
For where be ocean waves but half so clear,
So calmly constant, and so kindly warm,
As Love's most mild and glowing atmosphere,
That hath no dregs to be upturn'd by storm ?
Thus, sweet, thy gracious gifts are gifts of price,
And more than gold to doting Avarice.

THE curse of Adam, the old curse of all,
Though I inherit in this feverish life

Of worldly toil, vain wishes, and hard strife,
And fruitless thought, in Care's eternal thrall,
Yet more sweet honey than of bitter gall
I taste, through thee, my Eva, my sweet wife.
Then what was Man's lost Paradise!—how rife
Of bliss, since love is with him in his fall!
Such as our own pure passion still might frame,
Of this fair earth, and its delightful bow'rs,
If no fell sorrow, like the serpent, came
To trail its venom o'er the sweetest flow'rs;—
But oh! as many and such tears are ours,
As only should be shed for guilt and shame!

SILENCE

THERE is a silence where hath been no sound,
There is a silence where no sound may be,
In the cold grave—under the deep deep sea,
Or in wide desert where no life is found,
Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound;
No voice is hush'd—no life treads silently,
But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,
That never spoke, over the idle ground:
But in green ruins, in the desolate walls
Of antique palaces, where Man hath been,
Though the dun fox, or wild hyena, calls,
And owls, that flit continually between,
Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan,
There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone.

MIDNIGHT

UNFATHOMABLE Night! how dost thou sweep
Over the flooded earth, and darkly hide
The mighty city under thy full tide,
Making a silent palace for old Sleep;
Like his own Temple under the hush'd deep,
Where all the busy day he doth abide,
And, forth at the late dark, outspreadeth wide
His dusky wings whence the cold waters sweep!

How peacefully the living millions lie !

Lull'd unto death beneath his poppy spells ;—
There is no breath—no living stir—no cry—
No tread of foot—no song—no music-call,—

Only the sound of melancholy bells—
The voice of Time,—Survivor of them all !

ON A SLEEPING CHILD

I

O, 'TIS a touching thing to make one weep—

A tender infant with its curtain'd eye,

Breathing as it would neither live nor die,

With that unmoving countenance of sleep !

As if its silent dream, serene and deep,

Had lined its slumbers with a still blue sky ;

So that the passive cheeks unconscious lie,

With no more life than roses', just to keep

The blushes warm and the mild odorous breath :

O blossom-boy ! so calm is thy repose,

So sweet a compromise of life and death,

'Tis pity those fair buds should e'er uncloze,

For Memory to stain their inward leaf,

Tinging thy dreams with unacquainted grief.

II

THINE eyelids slept so beauteously, I deem'd

No eyes would wake more beautiful than they ;

Thy glossy cheeks so unimpassion'd lay,

I loved their peacefulness, and never dream'd

Of dimples ; for thy parted lips so seem'd

I did not think a smile could sweetlier play,

Nor that so graceful life could charm away

Thy graceful death, till those blue eyes upbeam'd.

Now slumber lies in dimpled eddies drown'd,

And roses bloom more rosily for joy,

And odorous silence ripens into sound,

And fingers move to mirth,—All-beauteous boy !

How dost thou waken into smiles, and prove,

If not more lovely, thou art more like Love !

TO OCEAN

SHALL I rebuke thee, Ocean, my old love,
That once, in rage, with the wild winds at strife,
Thou darest menace my unit of a life,
Sending my clay below, my soul above,
Whilst roar'd thy waves, like lions when they rove
By night, and bound upon their prey by stealth?
Yet didst thou ne'er restore my fainting health?—
Didst thou ne'er murmur gently like the dove?
Nay, dost thou not against my own dear shore
Full break, last link between my land and me?—
My absent friends talk in thy very roar,
In thy waves' beat their kindly pulse I see,
And, if I must not see my England more,
Next to her soil, my grave be found in thee!

COBLENZ, *May* '35.

THINK, sweetest, if my lids are not now wet,
The tenderest tears lie ready at the brim,
To see thine own dear eyes—so pale and dim,
Touching my soul with full and fond regret,
For on thy ease my heart's whole care is set;
Seeing I love thee in no passionate whim,
Whose summer dates but with the rose's trim,
Which one hot June can perish and beget,—
Ah, no! I chose thee for affection's pet,
For unworn love, and constant cherishing—
To smile but to thy smile—or else to fret
When thou art fretted—rather than to sing
Elsewhere. Alas! I ought to soothe and kiss
Thy dear pale cheek while I assure thee this!

COBLENZ, '35.

FALSE POETS AND TRUE

TO WORDSWORTH

LOOK how the lark soars upward and is gone,
Turning a spirit as he nears the sky!
His voice is heard, but body there is none
To fix the vague excursions of the eye.
So, poets' songs are with us, tho' they die
Obscured, and hid by death's oblivious shroud,
And Earth inherits the rich melody
Like raining music from the morning cloud.
Yet, few there be who pipe so sweet and loud
Their voices reach us through the lapse of space:
The noisy day is deafen'd by a crowd
Of undistinguish'd birds, a twittering race;
But only lark and nightingale forlorn
Fill up the silences of night and morn.

LOVE, I am jealous of a worthless man
Whom—for his merits—thou dost hold too dear:
No better than myself, he lies as near
And precious to thy bosom. He may span
Thy sacred waist and with thy sweet breath fan
His happy cheek, and thy most willing ear
Invade with words and call his love sincere
And true as mine, and prove it—if he can:—
Not that I hate him for such deeds as this—
He were a devil to adore thee less,
Who wears thy favour,—I am ill at ease
Rather lest he should e'er too coldly press
Thy gentle hand:—This is my jealousy
Making himself suspect but never thee!

LOVE, see thy lover humbled at thy feet,
Not in servility, but homage sweet,
Gladly inclined:—and with my bended knee
Think that my inward spirit bows to thee—

More proud indeed than when I stand or climb
Elsewhere:—there is no statue so sublime
As Love's in all the world, and e'en to kiss
The pedestal is still a better bliss
Than all ambitions. O! Love's lowest base
Is far above the reaching of disgrace
To shame this posture. Let me then draw nigh
Feet that have fared so nearly to the sky,
And when this duteous homage has been given
I will rise up and clasp the heart in Heaven.

LEAR

A POOR old king, with sorrow for my crown,
Throned upon straw, and mantled with the wind—
For pity, my own tears have made me blind
That I might never see my children's frown;
And, may be, madness, like a friend, has thrown
A folded fillet over my dark mind,
So that unkindly speech may sound for kind—
Albeit I know not.—I am childish grown—
And have not gold to purchase wit withal—
I that have once maintain'd most royal state—
A very bankrupt now that may not call
My child, my child—all beggar'd save in tears,
Wherewith I daily weep an old man's fate,
Foolish—and blind—and overcome with years!

My heart is sick with longing, tho' I feed
On hope, Time goes with such a heavy pace
That neither gives nor takes from thy embrace,
As if he slept, forgetting his old speed:
For as in sunshine only we can read
The march of minutes on the dial's face;
So in the shadows of this lonely place,
There is no love, and time is dead indeed!

But when, dear lady, I am near thy heart,
 Thy smile is time, and then so swift it flies,
 It seems we only meet to tear apart,
 With aching hands, and lingering of eyes—
 Alas ! alas ! that we must learn hours' flight,
 By the same light of love that makes them bright !

LINES

ON SEEING MY WIFE AND TWO CHILDREN SLEEPING IN
 THE SAME CHAMBER

AND has the earth lost its so spacious round,
 The sky its blue circumference above,
 That in this little chamber there is found
 Both earth and heaven—my universe of love !
 All that my God can give me, or remove,
 Here sleeping, save myself, in mimic death.
 Sweet that in this small compass I behove
 To live their living and to breathe their breath !
 Almost I wish that, with one common sigh,
 We might resign all mundane care and strife,
 And seek together that transcendent sky,
 Where Father, Mother, Children, Husband, Wife,
 Together pant in everlasting life !

COBLENZ, Nov. 1835.

STANZAS

Is there a bitter pang for love removed,
 O God ! The dead love doth not cost more tears
 Than the alive, the loving, the beloved—
 Not yet, not yet beyond all hopes and fears !
 Would I were laid
 Under the shade
 Of the calm grave, and the long grass of years,—
 That love might die with sorrow :—I am sorrow ;
 And she, that loves me tenderest, doth press

Most poison from my cruel lips, and borrow
Only new anguish from the old caress ;
Oh, this world's grief
Hath no relief
In being wrung from a great happiness.
Would I had never filled thine eyes with love,
For love is only tears : would I had never
Breathed such a curse-like blessing as we prove ;
Now, if ' Farewell ' *could* bless thee, I would sever !
Would I were laid
Under the shade
Of the cold tomb, and the long grass for ever !

SONG

THERE is dew for the flow'ret
And honey for the bee,
And bowers for the wild bird,
And love for you and me.

There are tears for the many
And pleasures for the few ;
But let the world pass on, dear,
There's love for me and you.

[IN MEMORIAM]

LITTLE eyes that scarce did see,
Little lips that never smiled ;
Alas ! my little dear dead child,
Death is thy father, and not me,
I but embraced thee, soon as he.

THE DREAM OF EUGENE ARAM, THE
MURDERER

'TWAS in the prime of summer time,
An evening calm and cool,
And four-and-twenty happy boys
Came bounding out of school :
There were some that ran and some that leapt,
Like troutlets in a pool.

Away they sped with gamesome minds,
 And souls untouched by sin ;
 To a level mead they came, and there
 They drave the wickets in :
 Pleasantly shone the setting sun
 Over the town of Lynn.

Like sportive deer they cours'd about,
 And shouted as they ran,—
 Turning to mirth all things of earth,
 As only boyhood can ;
 But the Usher sat remote from all,
 A melancholy man !

His hat was off, his vest apart,
 To catch heaven's blessed breeze ;
 For a burning thought was in his brow,
 And his bosom ill at ease :
 So he lean'd his head on his hands, and read
 The book between his knees !

Leaf after leaf, he turn'd it o'er,
 Nor ever glanc'd aside,
 For the peace of his soul he read that book
 In the golden eventide :
 Much study had made him very lean,
 And pale, and leaden-ey'd.

At last he shut the ponderous tome,
 With a fast and fervent grasp
 He strain'd the dusky covers close,
 And fixed the brazen hasp :
 ' Oh, God ! could I so close my mind,
 And clasp it with a clasp ! '

Then leaping on his feet upright,
 Some moody turns he took,—
 Now up the mead, then down the mead,
 And past a shady nook,—
 And, lo ! he saw a little boy
 That pored upon a book !

'My gentle lad, what is't you read—
Romance or fairy fable?
Or is it some historic page,
Of kings and crowns unstable?'
The young boy gave an upward glance,—
It is "The Death of Abel."

The Usher took six hasty strides,
As smit with sudden pain,—
Six hasty strides beyond the place,
Then slowly back again;
And down he sat beside the lad,
And talk'd with him of Cain;

And, long since then, of bloody men,
Whose deeds tradition saves;
Of lonely folk cut off unseen,
And hid in sudden graves;
Of horrid stabs, in groves forlorn,
And murders done in caves;

And how the sprites of injur'd men
Shriek upward from the sod,—
Aye, how the ghostly hand will point
To show the burial clod;
And unknown facts of guilty acts
Are seen in dreams from God!

He told how murderers walk the earth
Beneath the curse of Cain,—
With crimson clouds before their eyes,
And flames about their brain:
For blood has left upon their souls
Its everlasting stain!

'And well,' quoth he, 'I know, for truth,
Their pangs must be extreme,—
Woe, woe, unutterable woe,—
Who spill life's sacred stream!
For why? Methought, last night, I wrought
A murder, in a dream!

' One that had never done me wrong—
A feeble man, and old ;
I led him to a lonely field,—
The moon shone clear and cold :
Now here, said I, this man shall die,
And I will have his gold !

' Two sudden blows with a ragged stick,
And one with a heavy stone,
One hurried gash with a hasty knife,—
And then the deed was done ;
There was nothing lying at my foot
But lifeless flesh and bone !

' Nothing but lifeless flesh and bone,
That could not do me ill ;
And yet I fear'd him all the more,
For lying there so still :
There was a manhood in his look,
That murder could not kill !

' And, lo ! the universal air
Seem'd lit with ghastly flame ;—
Ten thousand thousand dreadful eyes
Were looking down in blame :
I took the dead man by his hand,
And call'd upon his name !

' Oh, God ! it made me quake to see
Such sense within the slain !
But when I touch'd the lifeless clay,
The blood gushed out again !
For every clot, a burning spot,
Was scorching in my brain !

' My head was like an ardent coal,
My heart as solid ice ;
My wretched, wretched soul, I knew,
Was at the Devil's price :
A dozen times I groan'd ; the dead
Had never groan'd but twice

' And now, from forth the frowning sky
From the Heaven's topmost height,
I heard a voice—the awful voice
Of the blood-avenging Sprite:—
“Thou guilty man! take up thy dead,
And hide it from my sight!”

' I took the dreary body up,
And cast it in a stream,—
A sluggish water, black as ink,
The depth was so extreme:—
My gentle Boy, remember this
Is nothing but a dream!

' Down went the corse with a hollow plunge,
And vanish'd in the pool;
Anon I cleans'd my bloody hands,
And wash'd my forehead cool,
And sat among the urchins young
That evening in the school.

' Oh, Heaven, to think of their white souls,
And mine so black and grim!
I could not share in childish prayer,
Nor join in Evening Hymn:
Like a Devil of the Pit, I seem'd,
'Mid holy Cherubim!

' And Peace went with them, one and all,
And each calm pillow spread;
But Guilt was my grim Chamberlain
That lighted me to bed;
And drew my midnight curtains round
With fingers bloody red!

' All night I lay in agony,
In anguish dark and deep;
My fever'd eyes I dared not close,
But stared aghast at Sleep:
For Sin had render'd unto her
The keys of Hell to keep!

‘ All night I lay in agony,
 From weary chime to chime,
 With one besetting horrid hint,
 That rack’d me all the time,—
 A mighty yearning, like the first
 Fierce impulse unto crime !

‘ One stern tyrannic thought, that made
 All other thoughts its slave ;
 Stronger and stronger every pulse
 Did that temptation crave,—
 Still urging me to go and see
 The Dead Man in his grave !

‘ Heavily I rose up, as soon
 As light was in the sky,
 And sought the black accursed pool
 With a wild misgiving eye ;
 And I saw the Dead in the river bed,
 For the faithless stream was dry !

‘ Merrily rose the lark, and shook
 The dew-drop from its wing ;
 But I never mark’d its morning flight,
 I never heard it sing :
 For I was stooping once again
 Under the horrid thing.

‘ With breathless speed, like a soul in chase,
 I took him up and ran ;—
 There was no time to dig a grave
 Before the day began :
 In a lonesome wood, with heaps of leaves,
 I hid the murder’d man !

‘ And all that day I read in school,
 But my thought was other where ;
 As soon as the mid-day task was done,
 In secret I was there :
 And a mighty wind had swept the leaves,
 And still the corse was bare !

'Then down I cast me on my face,
 And first began to weep,
 For I knew my secret then was one
 That earth refused to keep :
 Or land, or sea, though he should be
 Ten thousand fathoms deep.

'So wills the fierce avenging Sprite,
 Till blood for blood atones !
 Ay, though he's buried in a cave,
 And trodden down with stones,
 And years have rotted off his flesh,—
 The world shall see his bones !

'Oh, God ! that horrid, horrid dream
 Besets me now awake !
 Again—again, with a dizzy brain,
 The human life I take ;
 And my red right hand grows raging hot,
 Like Cranmer's at the stake.

'And still no peace for the restless clay,
 Will wave or mould allow ;
 The horrid thing pursues my soul,—
 It stands before me now !'
 The fearful Boy look'd up, and saw
 Huge drops upon his brow.

That very night, while gentle sleep
 The urchin eyelids kiss'd,
 Two stern-faced men set out from Lynn,
 Through the cold and heavy mist ;
 And Eugene Aram walked between,
 With gyves upon his wrist.

THE LAST MAN

'TWAS in the year two thousand and one,
 A pleasant morning of May,
 I sat on the gallow-trees all alone,
 A chaunting a merry lay,—
 To think how the pest had spared my life,
 To sing with the larks that day !

When up the heath came a jolly knave,
Like a scarecrow, all in rags :
It made me crow to see his old duds
All abroad in the wind, like flags :—
So up he came to the timbers' foot
And pitch'd down his greasy bags.—

Good Lord ! how blythe the old beggar was !
At pulling out his scraps,—
The very sight of his broken orts
Made a work in his wrinkled chaps :
'Come down,' says he, 'you Newgate bird,
And have a taste of my snaps !'—

Then down the rope, like a tar from the mast,
I slid, and by him stood ;
But I wished myself on the gallows again
When I smelt that beggar's food,
A foul beef-bone, and a mouldy crust ;
'Oh !' quoth he, 'the heavens are good !'

Then after this grace he cast him down :
Says I, 'You'll get sweeter air
A pace or two off, on the windward side,'
For the felons' bones lay there.
But he only laugh'd at the empty skulls,
And offered them part of his fare.

'I never harm'd *them*, and they won't harm me :
Let the proud and the rich be cravens !'
I did not like that strange beggar man,
He look'd so up at the heavens.
Anon he shook out his empty old poke ;
'There's the crumbs,' saith he, 'for the ravens !'

It made me angry to see his face,
It had such a jesting look ;
But while I made up my mind to speak,
A small case-bottle he took :
Quoth he, 'though I gather the green water-cress,
My drink is not of the brook !'

Full manners-like he tender'd the dram ;
Oh, it came of a dainty cask !
But, whenever it came to his turn to pull,
'Your leave, good sir, I must ask ;
But I always wipe the brim with my sleeve,
When a hangman sups at my flask !'

And then he laugh'd so loudly and long,
The churl was quite out of breath ;
I thought the very Old One was come
To mock me before my death,
And wish'd I had buried the dead men's bones
That were lying about the heath !

But the beggar gave me a jolly clap—
'Come, let us pledge each other,
For all the wide world is dead beside,
And we are brother and brother—
I've a yearning for thee in my heart,
As if we had come of one mother.

'I've a yearning for thee in my heart
That almost makes me weep,
For as I pass'd from town to town
The folks were all stone-asleep,—
But when I saw thee sitting aloft,
It made me both laugh and leap !'

Now a curse (I thought) be on his love,
And a curse upon his mirth,—
An' if it were not for that beggar man
I'd be the King of the earth,—
But I promis'd myself an hour should come
To make him rue his birth—

So down we sat and bous'd again
Till the sun was in mid-sky,
When, just when the gentle west-wind came,
We hearken'd a dismal cry ;
'Up, up, on the tree,' quoth the beggar man,
'Till these horrible dogs go by !'

And, lo ! from the forest's far-off skirts,
They came all yelling for gore,
A hundred hounds pursuing at once,
And a panting hart before,
Till he sunk down at the gallows' foot,
And there his haunches they tore !

His haunches they tore, without a horn
To tell when the chase was done ;
And there was not a single scarlet coat
To flaunt it in the sun !—
I turn'd, and look'd at the beggar man,
And his tears dropt one by one !

And with curses sore he chid at the hounds,
Till the last dropt out of sight,
Anon, saith he, ' Let 's down again,
And ramble for our delight,
For the world 's all free, and we may choose
A right cozie barn for to-night ! '

With that, he set up his staff on end,
And it fell with the point due West ;
So we far'd that way to a city great,
Where the folks had died of the pest—
It was fine to enter in house and hall
Wherever it liked me best ;

For the porters all were stiff and cold,
And could not lift their heads ;
And when we came where their masters lay,
The rats leapt out of the beds ;
The grandest palaces in the land
Were as free as workhouse sheds.

But the beggar man made a mumping face,
And knocked at every gate :
It made me curse to hear how he whined,
So our fellowship turned to hate,
And I bade him walk the world by himself,
For I scorn'd so humble a mate !

So *he* turn'd right, and *I* turn'd left,
As if we had never met;
And I chose a fair stone house for myself,
For the city was all to let;
And for three brave holidays drank my fill
Of the choicest that I could get.

And because my jerkin was coarse and worn,
I got me a properer vest;
It was purple velvet, stitch'd o'er with gold,
And a shining star at the breast!—
'Twas enough to fetch old Joan from her grave
To see me so purely drest!

But Joan was dead and under the mould,
And every buxom lass;
In vain I watch'd, at the window pane
For a Christian soul to pass!
But sheep and kine wander'd up the street,
And browz'd on the new-come grass.—

When lo! I spied the old beggar man,
And lustily he did sing!—
His rags were lapp'd in a scarlet cloak,
And a crown he had like a King;
So he stept right up before my gate
And danc'd me a saucy fling!

Heaven mend us all!—but, within my mind,
I had killed him then and there;
To see him lording so braggart-like
That was born to his beggar's fare,
And how he had stolen the royal crown
His betters were meant to wear.

But God forbid that a thief should die
Without his share of the laws!
So I nimbly whipt my tackle out,
And soon tied up his claws,—
I was judge myself, and jury, and all,
And solemnly tried the cause.

But the beggar man would not plead, but cried
Like a babe without its corals,
For he knew how hard it is apt to go
When the law and a thief have quarrels,—
There was not a Christian soul alive
To speak a word for his morals.

Oh, how gaily I doff'd my costly gear,
And put on my work-day clothes ;
I was tired of such a long Sunday life,—
And never was one of the sloths ;
But the beggar man grumbled a weary deal,
And made many crooked mouths.

So I haul'd him off to the gallows' foot,
And blinded him in his bags ;
'Twas a weary job to heave him up ;
For a doom'd man always lags.
But by ten of the clock he was off his legs
In the wind, and airing his rags !

So there he hung, and there I stood,
The LAST MAN left alive,
To have my own will of all the earth :
Quoth I, now I shall thrive !
But when was every honey made
With one bee in a hive ?

My conscience began to gnaw my heart,
Before the day was done,
For other men's lives had all gone out,
Like candles in the sun !—
But it seem'd as if I had broke, at last,
A thousand necks in one !

So I went and cut his body down
To bury it decentlie ;—
God send there were any good soul alive
To do the like by me !
But the wild dogs came with terrible speed,
And bade me up the tree !

My sight was like a drunkard's sight,
And my head began to swim,
To see their jaws all white with foam,
Like the ravenous ocean brim ;—
But when the wild dogs trotted away
Their jaws were bloody and grim !

Their jaws were bloody and grim, good Lord !
But the beggar man, where was he ?—
There was naught of him but some ribbons of rags
Below the gallows' tree !—
I know the Devil, when I am dead,
Will send his hounds for me !—

I've buried my babies one by one,
And dug the deep hole for Joan,
And covered the faces of kith and kin,
And felt the old churchyard stone
Go cold to my heart, full many a time,
But I never felt so lone !

For the lion and Adam were company,
And the tiger him beguiled :
But the simple kine are foes to my life,
And the household brutes are wild.
If the veriest cur would lick my hand,
I could love it like a child !

And the beggar man's ghost besets my dream,
At night to make me madder,—
And my wretched conscience within my breast,
Is like a stinging adder ;—
I sigh when I pass the gallows' foot,
And look at the rope and ladder !—

For hanging looks sweet,—but, alas ! in vain
My desperate fancy begs,—
I must turn my cup of sorrows quite up,
And drink it to the dregs,—
For there is not another man alive,
In the world to pull my legs !

QUEEN MAB

A LITTLE fairy comes at night,
Her eyes are blue, her hair is brown,
With silver spots upon her wings,
And from the moon she flutters down.

She has a little silver wand,
And when a good child goes to bed
She waves her wand from right to left,
And makes a circle round its head.

And then it dreams of pleasant things,
Of fountains filled with fairy fish,
And trees that bear delicious fruit,
And bow their branches at a wish :

Of arbours filled with dainty scents
From lovely flowers that never fade ;
Bright flies that glitter in the sun,
And glow-worms shining in the shade.

And talking birds with gifted tongues,
For singing songs and telling tales,
And pretty dwarfs to show the way
Through fairy hills and fairy dales.

But when a bad child goes to bed,
From left to right she weaves her rings,
And then it dreams all through the night
Of only ugly horrid things !

Then lions come with glaring eyes,
And tigers growl, a dreadful noise,
And ogres draw their cruel knives,
To shed the blood of girls and boys.

Then stormy waves rush on to drown,
Or raging flames come scorching round,
Fierce dragons hover in the air,
And serpents crawl along the ground.

Then wicked children wake and weep,
And wish the long black gloom away ;
But good ones love the dark, and find
The night as pleasant as the day.

THE STREAMLET

STILL glides the gentle streamlet on,
 With shifting current new and strange ;
 The water that was here is gone,
 But those green shadows do not change.
 Serene, or ruffled by the storm,
 On present waves, as on the past,
 The mirror'd grove retains its form,
 The self-same trees their semblance cast.
 The hue each fleeting globule wears,
 That drop bequeaths it to the next,
 One picture still the surface bears,
 To illustrate the murmur'd text.
 So, love, however time may flow,
 Fresh hours pursuing those that flee,
 One constant image still shall show
 My tide of life is true to thee !

TO MY DAUGHTER

ON HER BIRTHDAY

DEAR Fanny ! nine long years ago,
 While yet the morning sun was low,
 And rosy with the Eastern glow
 The landscape smil'd—
 Whilst low'd the newly-waken'd herds—
 Sweet as the early song of birds,
 I heard those first, delightful words,
 'Thou hast a Child !'
 Along with that uprising dew
 Tears glisten'd in my eyes, though few,
 To hail a dawning quite as new
 To me, as Time :
 It was not sorrow—not annoy—
 But like a happy maid, though coy,
 With grief-like welcome even Joy
 Forestalls its prime.

So mayst thou live, dear ! many years,
In all the bliss that life endears,
Not without smiles, nor yet from tears
Too strictly kept :
When first thy infant littleness
I folded in my fond caress,
The greatest proof of happiness
Was this—I wept.

BIRTHDAY VERSES

GOOD-MORROW to the golden Morning
Good-morrow to the world's delight !
I've come to bless thy life's beginning,
That hath made my own so bright !

I have brought no roses, Dearest !
Summer lies upon her bier ;
It was when all sweets were over
Thou wert born to bless the year.

But I bring thee jewels, Fairest !
In thy bonny locks to shine ;
And, if love seem in their glances,
They have learn'd that look of mine !

To *****

I GAZE upon a city,
A city new and strange ;
Down many a wat'ry vista
My fancy takes a range ;
From side to side I saunter,
And wonder where I am ;—
And can *you* be in England,
And I at Rotterdam !

Before me lie dark waters,
In broad canals and deep,
Whereon the silver moonbeams
Sleep, restless in their sleep :
A sort of vulgar Venice
Reminds me where I am,—
Yes, yes, you are in England,
And I'm at Rotterdam.

Tall houses with quaint gables,
Where frequent windows shine,
And quays that lead to bridges,
And trees in formal line,
And masts of spicy vessels,
From distant Surinam,
All tell me you're in England,
And I'm in Rotterdam.

Those sailors,—how outlandish
The face and garb of each !
They deal in foreign gestures,
And use a foreign speech ;
A tongue not learned near Isis,
Or studied by the Cam,
Declares that you're in England,
But I'm at Rotterdam.

And now across a market
My doubtful way I trace,
Where stands a solemn statue,
The Genius of the place ;
And to the great Erasmus
I offer my salaam,—
Who tells me you're in England,
And I'm at Rotterdam.

The coffee-room is open,
I mingle in its crowd ;
The dominoes are rattling,
The hookahs raise a cloud ;

A flavour, none of Fearon's,
That mingles with my dram,
Reminds me you're in England,
But I'm in Rotterdam.

Then here it goes, a bumper,—
The toast it shall be mine,
In Schiedam, or in Sherry,
Tokay, or Hock of Rhine,—
It well deserves the brightest
Where sunbeam ever swam,—
'The girl I love in England,'
I drink at Rotterdam!

SERENADE

AN, sweet, thou little knowest how
I wake and passionate watches keep;
And yet while I address thee now,
Methinks thou smilest in thy sleep.
'Tis sweet enough to make me weep,
That tender thought of love and thee,
That while the world is hush'd so deep,
Thy soul's perhaps awake to me!
Sleep on, sleep on, sweet bride of sleep!
With golden visions for thy dower,
While I this midnight vigil keep,
And bless thee in thy silent bower;
To me 'tis sweeter than the power
Of sleep, and fairy dreams unfurl'd,
That I alone, at this still hour,
In patient love outwatch the world,

THE LEE SHORE

SLEET! and hail! and thunder!
And ye Winds that rave,
Till the sands thereunder
Tinge the sullen wave,—

Winds that, like a Demon,
Howl with horrid note
Round the toiling Seaman
In his tossing boat—
From his humble dwelling,
On the shingly shore,
Where the billows swelling
Keep such hollow roar—
From that weeping Woman,
Seeking with her cries,
Succour superhuman
From the frowning skies—
From the Urchin pining
For his Father's knee,
From the lattice shining
Drive him out to sea!
Let broad leagues dissever
Him from yonder foam—
O God! to think Man ever
Comes too near his Home.

TO HOPE

O! TAKE, young Seraph, take thy harp,
And play to me so cheerily;
For grief is dark, and care is sharp,
And life wears on so wearily.

O! take thy harp!

Oh! sing as thou wert wont to do,
When, all youth's sunny season long,
I sat and listen'd to thy song,
And yet 'twas ever, ever new.—
With magic in each heav'n-tun'd string.
The future bliss thy constant theme.
Oh then each little woe took wing
Away, like phantoms of a dream;
As if each sound,
That flutter'd round,
Had floated over Lethe's stream!

By all those bright and happy hours
We spent in life's sweet eastern bow'rs,
Where thou would'st sit and smile, and show,
Ere buds were come—where flow'rs would blow,
And oft anticipate the rise
Of life's warm sun that scal'd the skies,
By many a story of love and glory,
And friendships promis'd oft to me,
By all the faith I lent to thee,
Oh! take, young Seraph, take thy harp,
And play to me so cheerily;
For grief is dark, and care is sharp,
And life wears on so wearily.

O! take thy harp!

Perchance the strings will sound less clear,
That long have lain neglected by
In sorrow's misty atmosphere—
It ne'er may speak as it hath spoken,
Such joyous notes so brisk and high
But are its golden cords all broken?
Are there not some, though weak and low,
To play a lullaby to woe?

But thou can'st sing of love no more,
For Celia show'd that dream was vain—
And many a fancied bliss is o'er,
That comes not e'en in dreams again.

Alas! alas!

How pleasures pass,
And leave thee now no subject, save
The peace and bliss beyond the grave!—
Then be thy flight among the skies;
Take, then, Oh! take the skylark's wing,
And leave dull earth, and heav'nward rise
O'er all its tearful clouds, and sing

On skylark's wing!

Another life-spring there adorns
Another youth,—without the dread
Of cruel care, whose crown of thorns
Is here for manhood's aching head.—

Oh, there are realms of welcome day,
 A world where tears are wiped away!
 Then be thy flight among the skies;
 Take then, Oh! take the skylark's wing,
 And leave dull earth, and heav'nward rise
 O'er all its tearful clouds, and sing
 On skylark's wing!

ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF CLAPHAM ACADEMY¹

Ah me! those old familiar bounds!
 That classic house, those classic grounds,
 My pensive thought recalls!
 What tender urchins now confine,
 What little captives now repine,
 Within yon irksome walls?

Ay, that's the very house! I know
 Its ugly windows, ten a-row!
 Its chimneys in the rear!
 And there's the iron rod so high,
 That drew the thunder from the sky,
 And turn'd our table-beer!

There I was birch'd! there I was bred!
 There like a little Adam fed
 From Learning's woeful tree!
 The weary tasks I used to con!—
 The hopeless leaves I wept upon!—
 Most fruitless leaves to me!—

The summon'd class!—the awful bow!—
 I wonder who is master now
 And wholesome anguish sheds!
 How many ushers now employs,
 How many maids to see the boys
 Have nothing in their heads!

¹ No connexion with any other ode.

And Mrs. S*** ?—Doth she abet
 (Like Pallas in the parlour) yet
 Some favour'd two or three,—
 The little Crichtons of the hour,
 Her muffin-medals that devour,
 And swill her prize—bohea ?

Ay, there's the play-ground ! there's the limo
 Beneath whose shade in summer's prime
 So wildly I have read !—
 Who sits there *now*, and skims the cream
 Of young Romance, and weaves a dream
 Of Love and Cottage-bread ?

Who struts the Randall of the walk ?
 Who models tiny heads in chalk ?
 Who scoops the light canoe ?
 What early genius buds apace ?
 Where's Poynter ? Harris ? Bowers ? Chase ?
 Hal Baylis ? blithe Carew ?

Alack ! they're gone—a thousand ways !
 And some are serving in 'the Greys,'
 And some have perish'd young !—
 Jack Harris weds his second wife ;
 Hal Baylis drives the *wane* of life ;
 And blithe Carew—is hung !

Grave Bowers teaches A B C
 To savages at Owhyee ;
 Poor Chase is with the worms !—
 All, all are gone—the olden breed !—
 New crops of mushroom boys succeed,
 'And push us from our *forms* !'

Lo ! where they scramble forth, and shout,
 And leap, and skip, and mob about,
 At play where we have play'd !
 Some hop, some run (some fall), some twine
 Their crony arms ; some in the shine,
 And some are in the shade !

Lo! there what mix'd conditions run!
The orphan lad; the widow's son;
And Fortune's favour'd care—
The wealthy-born, for whom she hath
Mac-Adamized the future path—
The Nabob's pamper'd heir!

Some brightly starr'd—some evil born,—
For honour some, and some for scorn,—
For fair or foul renown!
Good, bad, indiff'rent—none may lack!
Look, here's a White, and there's a Black!
And there's a Creole brown!

Some laugh and sing, some mope and weep,
And wish *their* frugal sires would keep
Their only sons at home;—
Some tease the future tense, and plan
The full-grown doings of the man,
And pant for years to come!

A foolish wish! There's one at hoop;
And four at *fives*! and five who stoop
The marble taw to speed!
And one that curvets in and out,
Reining his fellow Cob about,—
Would I were in his *steed*!

Yet he would gladly halt and drop
That boyish harness off, to swop
With this world's heavy van—
To toil, to tug. O little fool!
While thou canst be a horse at school
To wish to be a man!

Perchance thou deem'st it were a thing
To wear a crown,—to be a king!
And sleep on regal down!
Alas! thou know'st not kingly cares;
Far happier is thy head that wears
That hat without a crown!

And dost thou think that years acquire
 New added joys ? Dost think thy sire
 More happy than his son ?
 That manhood's mirth ?—Oh, go thy ways
 To Drury Lane when —— *plays*,
 And see how *forced* our fun !

Thy taws are brave !—thy tops are rare !—
Our tops are spun with coils of care,
Our dumps are no delight !—
 The Elgin marbles are but tame,
 And 'tis at best a sorry game
 To fly the Muse's kite !

Our hearts are dough, our heels are lead,
 Our topmost joys fall dull and dead
 Like balls with no rebound !
 And often with a faded eye
 We look behind, and send a sigh
 Towards that merry ground !

Then be contented. Thou hast got
 The most of heaven in thy young lot
 There's sky-blue in thy cup !
 Thou'lt find thy Manhood all too fast—
 Soon come, soon gone ! and Age at last
 A sorry *breaking-up* !

FLOWERS

I WILL not have the mad Clytie
 Whose head is turn'd by the sun ;
 The tulip is a courtly quean,
 Whom, therefore, I will shun ;
 The cowslip is a country wench,
 The violet is a nun ;—
 But I will woo the dainty rose,
 The queen of every one !

The pea is but a wanton witch,
In too much haste to wed,
And clasps her rings on every hand;
The wolfsbane I should dread;
Nor will I dreary rosemarye,
That always mourns the dead;—
But I will woo the dainty rose,
With her cheeks of tender red!

The lily is all in white, like a Saint,
And so is no mate for me—
And the daisy's cheek is tipp'd with a blush,
She is of such low degree;
Jasmine is sweet, and has many loves,
And the broom's betroth'd to the bee;—
But I will plight with the dainty rose,
For fairest of all is she.

I LOVE THEE

I LOVE thee—I love thee!
'Tis all that I can say;—
It is my vision in the night,
My dreaming in the day;
The very echo of my heart,
The blessing when I pray,
I love thee—I love thee,
Is all that I can say.

I love thee—I love thee!
Is ever on my tongue;
In all my proudest poesy
That chorus still is sung;
It is the verdict of my eyes,
Amidst the gay and young:
I love thee—I love thee,
A thousand maids among.

I love thee—I love thee !
Thy bright and hazel glance,
The mellow lute upon those lips,
Whose tender tones entrance ;
But most, dear heart of hearts, thy proofs
That still these words enhance,
I love thee—I love thee ;
Whatever be thy chance.

BALLAD

It was not in the winter
Our loving lot was cast !
It was the time of roses,
We plucked them as we passed !

That churlish season never frowned
On early lovers yet !—
Oh no—the world was newly crowned
With flowers, when first we met.

'Twas twilight, and I bade you go,
But still you held me fast ;—
It was the time of roses,—
We plucked them as we passed !

What else could peer my glowing cheek
That tears began to stud ?—
And when I asked the like of Love
You snatched a damask bud,—

And oped it to the dainty core
Still glowing to the last :—
It was the time of roses,
We plucked them as we passed !

THE DEATH-BED

WE watch'd her breathing thro' the night,
 Her breathing soft and low,
 As in her breast the wave of life
 Kept heaving to and fro!

So silently we seemed to speak—
 So slowly moved about!
 As we had lent her half our powers
 To eke her living out!

Our very hopes belied our fears
 Our fears our hopes belied—
 We thought her dying when she slept,
 And sleeping when she died!

For when the morn came dim and sad—
 And chill with early showers,
 Her quiet eyelids closed—she had
 Another morn than ours!

ANTICIPATION

'Coming events cast their shadow before.'

I HAD a vision in the summer light—
 Sorrow was in it and my inward sight
 Ached with sad images. The touch of tears
 Gush'd down my cheeks:—the figur'd woes of years
 Casting their shadows across sunny hours.
 Oh there was nothing sorrowful in flow'rs
 Wooing the glances of an April sun,
 Or apple blossoms opening one by one
 Their crimson bosoms—or the twitter'd words
 And warbled sentences of merry birds;—
 Or the small glitter and the humming wings
 Of golden flies and many colour'd things—
 Oh these were nothing sad—nor to see *Her*.
 Sitting beneath the comfortable stir

Of early leaves—casting the playful grace
Of moving shadows on so fair a face—
Nor in her brow serene—nor in the love
Of her mild eyes drinking the light above
With a long thirst—nor in her gentle smile—
Nor in her hand that shone blood-red the while
She rais'd it in the sun. All these were dear
To heart and eye—but an invisible fear
Shook in the trees and chill'd upon the air,
And if one spot was laughing brightest—there
My soul most sank and darken'd in despair!—
As if the shadows of a curtain'd room
Haunted me in the sun—as if the bloom
Of early flow'rets had no sweets for me
Nor apple blossoms any blush to see—
As if the noon had brought too bright a day—
And little birds were all too gay!—too gay!
As if the beauty of that Lovely One
Were all a fable.—Full before the sun
Stood Death and cast a shadow long before,
Like a dark pall enshrouding her all o'er,
Till eyes, and lips, and smiles, were all no more!

TO A CHILD EMBRACING HIS MOTHER

LOVE thy Mother, little one!
Kiss and clasp her neck again;
Hereafter she may have a son
Will kiss and clasp her neck in vain.

Love thy Mother, little one!

Gaze upon her living eyes,
And mirror back her love for thee;
Hereafter thou mayst shudder sighs
To meet them when they cannot see.

Gaze upon her living eyes!

Press her lips the while they glow
 With love that they have often told;
 Hereafter thou mayst press in woe,
 And kiss them till thine own are cold.

Press her lips the while they glow!

Oh! revere her raven hair!
 Although it be not silver-grey,
 Too early Death, led on by care,
 May snatch, save one dear lock away.

Oh! revere her raven hair!

Pray for her at eve and morn,
 That Heav'n may long the stroke defer,
 For thou mayst live the hour forlorn,
 When thou wilt ask to die with her.

Pray for her at eve and morn!

THE ELM TREE

A DREAM IN THE WOODS

'And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
 Finds tongues in trees.'—*As You Like It.*

'Twas in a shady Avenue,
 Where lofty Elms abound—

And from a tree

There came to me

A sad and solemn sound,
 That sometimes murmur'd overhead,
 And sometimes underground.

Amongst the leaves it seem'd to sigh,

Amid the boughs to moan;

It mutter'd in the stem, and then

The roots took up the tone;

As if beneath the dewy grass

The Dead began to groan.

No breeze there was to stir the leaves ;
No bolts that tempests launch,
To rend the trunk or rugged bark ;
No gale to bend the branch ;
No quake of earth to heave the roots,
That stood so stiff and staunch.

No bird was preening up aloft,
To rustle with its wing ;
No squirrel, in its sport or fear,
From bough to bough to spring ;
The solid bole
Had ne'er a hole
To hide a living thing !

No scooping hollow cell to lodge
A furtive beast or fowl,
The marten, bat,
Or forest cat
That nightly loves to prowl,
Nor ivy nook so apt to shroud
The moping, snoring owl.

But still the sound was in my ear,
A sad and solemn sound,
That sometimes murmur'd overhead,
And sometimes underground—
'Twas in a shady Avenue
Where lofty Elms abound.

O hath the Dryad still a tongue
In this ungenial clime ?
Have Sylvan Spirits still a voice
As in the classic prime—
To make the forest voluble,
As in the olden time ?

The olden time is dead and gone ;
Its years have fill'd their sum—
And e'en in Greece—her native Greece—
The Sylvan Nymph is dumb—
From ash, and beech, and aged oak,
No classic whispers come.

From Poplar, Pine, and drooping Birch,
And fragrant Linden Trees ;
No living sound
E'er hovers round,
Unless the vagrant breeze,
The music of the merry bird,
Or hum of busy bees.

But busy bees forsake the Elm
That bears no bloom aloft—
The Finch was in the hawthorn-bush,
The Blackbird in the croft ;
And among the firs the brooding Dove,
That else might murmur soft.

Yet still I heard that solemn sound,
And sad it was to boot,
From ev'ry overhanging bough,
And each minuter shoot ;
From rugged trunk and mossy rind,
And from the twisted root.

From these,—a melancholy moan ;
From those,—a dreary sigh ;
As if the boughs were wintry bare,
And wild winds sweeping by—
Whereas the smallest fleecy cloud
Was steadfast in the sky.

No sign or touch of stirring air
Could either sense observe—
The zephyr had not breath enough
The thistle-down to swerve,
Or force the filmy gossamers
To take another curve.

In still and silent slumber hush'd
All Nature seem'd to be :
From heaven above, or earth beneath,
No whisper came to me—
Except the solemn sound and sad
From that MYSTERIOUS TREE !

A hollow, hollow, hollow sound,
As is that dreamy roar
When distant billows boil and bound
Along a shingly shore—
But the ocean brim was far aloof,
A hundred miles or more.

No murmur of the gusty sea,
No tumult of the beach,
However they may foam and fret,
The bounded sense could reach—
Methought the trees in mystic tongue
Were talking each to each!—

Mayhap, rehearsing ancient tales
Of greenwood love or guilt,
Of whisper'd vows
Beneath their boughs ;
Or blood obscurely spilt ;
Or of that near-hand Mansion House
A Royal Tudor built.

Perchance, of booty won or shared
Beneath the starry cope—
Or where the suicidal wretch
Hung up the fatal rope ;
Or Beauty kept an evil tryste,
Insnares by Love and Hope.

Of graves, perchance, untimely scoop'd
At midnight dark and dank—
And what is underneath the sod
Whereon the grass is rank—
Of old intrigues,
And privy leagues,
Tradition leaves in blank.

Of traitor lips that mutter'd plots—
Of Kin who fought and fell—
God knows the undiscover'd schemes,
The arts and acts of Hell,
Perform'd long generations since,
If trees had tongues to tell!

With wary eyes, and ears alert,
As one who walks afraid,
I wander'd down the dappled path
Of mingled light and shade—
How sweetly gleam'd that arch of blue
Beyond the green arcade!

How cheerly shone the glimpse of Heav'n
Beyond that verdant aisle!
All overarch'd with lofty elms,
That quench'd the light, the while,
As dim and chill
As serves to fill
Some old Cathedral pile!

And many a gnarlèd trunk was there,
That ages long had stood,
Till Time had wrought them into shapes
Like Pan's fantastic brood;
Or still more foul and hideous forms
That Pagans carve in wood!

A crouching Satyr lurking here—
And there a Goblin grim—
As staring full of demon life
As Gothic sculptor's whim—
A marvel it had scarcely been
To hear a voice from him!

Some whisper from that horrid mouth
Of strange, unearthly tone;
Or wild infernal laugh, to chill
One's marrow in the bone.
But no—it grins like rigid Death,
And silent as a stone!

As silent as its fellows be,
For all is mute with them—
The branch that climbs the leafy roof—
The rough and mossy stem—
The crooked root,
And tender shoot,
Where hangs the dewy gem.

One mystic Tree alone there is,
Of sad and solemn sound—
That sometimes murmurs overhead,
And sometimes underground—
In all that shady Avenue,
Where lofty Elms abound.

PART II.

THE Scene is changed! No green Arcade,
No Trees all ranged a-row—
But scatter'd like a beaten host,
Dispersing to and fro;
With here and there a sylvan corse,
That fell before the foe.

The Foe that down in yonder dell
Pursues his daily toil;
As witness many a prostrate trunk,
Bereft of leafy spoil,
Hard by its wooden stump, whereon
The adder loves to coil.

Alone he works—his ringing blows
Have banish'd bird and beast;
The Hind and Fawn have canter'd off
A hundred yards at least;
And on the maple's lofty top,
The linnet's song has ceased.

No eye his labour overlooks,
Or when he takes his rest;
Except the timid thrush that peeps
Above her secret nest,
Forbid by love to leave the young
Beneath her speckled breast.

The Woodman's heart is in his work,
His axe is sharp and good:
With sturdy arm and steady aim
He smites the gaping wood;
From distant rocks
His lusty knocks
Re-echo many a rood.

His axe is keen, his arm is strong ;
The muscles serve him well ;
His years have reach'd an extra span,
The number none can tell ;
But still his lifelong task has been
The Timber Tree to fell.

Through Summer's parching sultriness,
And Winter's freezing cold,
From sapling youth
To virile growth,
And Age's rigid mould,
His energetic axe hath rung
Within that Forest old.

Aloft, upon his poising steel
The vivid sunbeams glance—
About his head and round his feet
The forest shadows dance ;
And bounding from his russet coat
The acorn drops askance.

His face is like a Druid's face,
With wrinkles furrow'd deep,
And tann'd by scorching suns as brown
As corn that's ripe to reap ;
But the hair on brow, and cheek, and chin,
Is white as wool of sheep.

His frame is like a giant's frame ;
His legs are long and stark ;
His arms like limbs of knotted yew ;
His hands like rugged bark ;
So he felleth still
With right good will,
As if to build an Ark !

Oh ! well within *His* fatal path
The fearful Tree might quake
Through every fibre, twig, and leaf,
With aspen tremour shake ;
Through trunk and root,
And branch and shoot,
A low complaining make !

Oh ! well to *Him* the Tree might breathe
A sad and solemn sound,
A sigh that murmur'd overhead,
And groans from underground ;
As in that shady Avenue
Where lofty Elms abound !

But calm and mute the Maple stands,
The Plane, the Ash, the Fir,
The Elm, the Beech, the drooping Birch,
Without the least demur ;
And e'en the Aspen's hoary leaf
Makes no unusual stir.

The Pines—those old gigantic Pines,
That writhe—recalling soon
The famous Human Group that writhes
With Snakes in wild festoon—
In ramous wrestlings interlaced
A Forest Læocoon—

Like Titans of primeval girth
By tortures overcome,
Their brown enormous limbs they twine
Bedew'd with tears of gum—
Fierce agonies that ought to yell,
But, like the marble, dumb.

Nay, yonder blasted Elm that stands
So like a man of sin,
Who, frantic, flings his arms abroad
To feel the Worm within—
For all that gesture, so intense,
It makes no sort of din !

An universal silence reigns
In rugged bark or peel,
Except that very trunk which rings
Beneath the biting steel—
Meanwhile the Woodman plies his axe
With unrelenting zeal !

No rustic song is on his tongue,
No whistle on his lips ;
But with a quiet thoughtfulness
His trusty tool he grips,
And, stroke on stroke, keeps hacking out
The bright and flying chips.

Stroke after stroke, with frequent dint
He spreads the fatal gash ;
Till lo ! the remnant fibres rend,
With harsh and sudden crash,
And on the dull resounding turf
The jarring branches lash !

Oh ! now the Forest Trees may sigh,
The Ash, the Poplar tall,
The Elm, the Birch, the drooping Beech,
The Aspens—one and all,
With solemn groan
And hollow moan
Lament a comrade's fall !

A goodly Elm, of noble birth,
That, thrice the human span—
While on their variegated course
The constant Seasons ran—
Through gale, and hail, and fiery bolt,
Had stood erect as Man.

But now, like Mortal Man himself,
Struck down by hand of God,
Or heathen Idol tumbled prone
Beneath th' Eternal's nod,
In all its giant bulk and length
It lies along the sod !—

Ay, now the Forest Trees may grieve
And make a common moan
Around that patriarchal trunk
So newly overthrown ;
And with a murmur recognize
A doom to be their own !

The Echo sleeps: the idle axe,
 A disregarded tool,
 Lies crushing with its passive weight
 The toad's reputed stool—
 The Woodman wipes his dewy brow
 Within the shadows cool.
 No Zephyr stirs: the ear may catch
 The smallest insect-hum;
 But on the disappointed sense
 No mystic whispers come;
 No tone of sylvan sympathy,
 The Forest Trees are dumb.
 No leafy noise, nor inward voice,
 No sad and solemn sound,
 That sometimes murmurs overhead,
 And sometimes underground;
 As in that shady Avenue,
 Where lofty Elms abound!

PART III.

THE deed is done: the Tree is low
 That stood so long and firm;
 The Woodman and his axe are gone,
 His toil has found its term;
 And where he wrought the speckled Thrush
 Securely hunts the worm.
 The Cony from the sandy bank
 Has run a rapid race,
 Through thistle, bent, and tangled fern,
 To seek the open space;
 And on its haunches sits erect
 To clean its furry face.
 The dappled Fawn is close at hand,
 The Hind is browsing near,—
 And on the Larch's lowest bough
 The Ousel whistles clear;
 But checks the note
 Within its throat,
 As choked with sudden fear!

With sudden fear her wormy quest
The thrush abruptly quits—
Through thistle, bent, and tangled fern
The startled Cony flits ;
And on the Larch's lowest bough
No more the Ousel sits.

With sudden fear
The dappled Deer
Effect a swift escape ;
But well might bolder creatures start,
And fly, or stand agape,
With rising hair, and curdled blood,
To see so grim a Shape !

The very sky turns pale above ;
The earth grows dark beneath ;
The human Terror thrills with cold,
And draws a shorter breath—
An universal panic owns
The dread approach of DEATH !

With silent pace, as shadows come,
And dark as shadows be,
The grisly Phantom takes his stand
Beside the fallen Tree,
And scans it with his gloomy eyes,
And laughs with horrid glee—

A dreary laugh and desolate,
Where mirth is void and null,
As hollow as its echo sounds
Within the hollow skull—

'Whoever laid this tree along,
His hatchet was not dull !

'The human arm and human tool
Have done their duty well !
But after sound of ringing axe
Must sound the ringing knell ;
When Elm or Oak
Have felt the stroke
My turn it is to fell !

' No passive unregarded tree,
A senseless thing of wood,
Wherein the sluggish sap ascends
To swell the vernal bud—
But conscious, moving, breathing trunks
That throb with living blood!

' No forest Monarch yearly clad
In mantle green or brown;
That unrecorded lives, and falls
By hand of rustic clown—
But Kings who don the purple robe,
And wear the jewelled crown.

' Ah! little recks the Royal mind,
Within his Banquet Hall,
While tapers shine and Music breathes
And Beauty leads the Ball,—
He little recks the oaken plank
Shall be his palace wall!

' Ah, little dreams the haughty Peer,
The while his Falcon flies—
Or on the blood-bedabbled turf
The antler'd quarry dies—
That in his own ancestral Park
The narrow dwelling lies!

' But haughty Peer and mighty King
One doom shall overwhelm!
The oaken cell
Shall lodge him well
Whose sceptre ruled a realm—
While he who never knew a home,
Shall find it in the Elm!

' The tatter'd, lean, dejected, wretch,
Who begs from door to door,
And dies within the cressy ditch,
Or on the barren moor,
The friendly Elm shall lodge and clothe
That houseless man, and poor!

' Yea, this recumbent rugged trunk,
That lies so long and prone,
With many a fallen acorn-cup,
And mast, and firry cone—
This rugged trunk shall hold its share
Of mortal flesh and bone !

' A Miser hoarding heaps of gold,
But pale with ague-fears—
A Wife lamenting love's decay,
With secret cruel tears,
Distilling bitter, bitter drops
From sweets of former years—

' A Man within whose gloomy mind,
Offence had darkly sunk,
Who out of fierce Revenge's cup
Hath madly, darkly drunk—
Grief, Avarice, and Hate shall sleep
Within this very trunk !

' This massy trunk that lies along,
And many more must fall—
For the very knave
Who digs the grave,
The man who spreads the pall,
And he who tolls the funeral bell,
The Elm shall have them all !

' The tall abounding Elm that grows
In hedgerows up and down ;
In field and forest, copse and park,
And in the peopled town,
With colonies of noisy rooks
That nestle on its crown.

' And well th' abounding Elm may grow
In field and hedge so rife,
In forest, copse, and wooded park,
And mid the city's strife,
For, every hour that passes by,
Shall end a human life !'

The Phantom ends: the shade is gone;
The sky is clear and bright;
On turf, and moss, and fallen Tree,
There glows a ruddy light;
And bounding through the golden fern
The Rabbit comes to bite.

The Thrush's mate beside her sits
And pipes a merry lay;
The Dove is in the evergreens;
And on the Larch's spray
The Fly-bird flutters up and down,
To catch its tiny prey.

The gentle Hind and dappled Fawn
Are coming up the glade;
Each harmless furr'd and feather'd thing
Is glad, and not afraid—
But on my sadden'd spirit still
The Shadow leaves a shade.

A secret, vague prophetic gloom,
As though by certain mark
I knew the fore-appointed Tree,
Within whose rugged bark
This warm and living frame shall find
Its narrow house and dark.

That mystic tree which breathed to me
A sad and solemn sound,
That sometimes murmur'd overhead
And sometimes underground;
Within that shady Avenue
Where lofty Elms abound.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

A ROMANCE

'A jolly place, said he, in times of old,
But something ails it now; the spot is curst.'

Hartleap Well, by Wordsworth.

PART I.

SOME dreams we have are nothing else but dreams,
Unnatural, and full of contradictions;
Yet others of our most romantic schemes
Are something more than fictions.

It might be only on enchanted ground;
It might be merely by a thought's expansion;
But in the spirit, or the flesh, I found
An old deserted Mansion.

A residence for woman, child, and man,
A dwelling-place,—and yet no habitation;
A House,—but under some prodigious ban
Of excommunication.

Unhinged the iron gates half open hung,
Jarr'd by the gusty gales of many winters,
That from its crumbled pedestal had flung
One marble globe in splinters.

No dog was at the threshold, great or small;
No pigeon on the roof—no household creature—
No cat demurely dozing on the wall—
Not one domestic feature.

No human figure stirr'd, to go or come,
No face look'd forth from shut or open casement;
No chimney smoked—there was no sign of Home
From parapet to basement.

With shatter'd panes the grassy court was starr'd;
The time-worn coping-stone had tumbled after!
And thro' the ragged roof the sky shone, barr'd
With naked beam and rafter.

O'er all there hung a shadow and a fear ;
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

The flow'r grew wild and rankly as the weed,
Roses with thistles struggled for espial,
And vagrant plants of parasitic breed
Had overgrown the Dial.

But gay or gloomy, steadfast or infirm,
No heart was there to heed the hour's duration ;
All times and tides were lost in one long term
Of stagnant desolation.

The wren had built within the Porch, she found'
Its quiet loneliness so sure and thorough ;
And on the lawn,—within its turfy mound,—
The rabbit made its burrow.

The rabbit wild and gray, that flitted thro'
The shrubby clumps, and frisk'd, and sat, and vanish'd,
But leisurely and bold, as if he knew
His enemy was banish'd.

The wary crow,—the pheasant from the woods—
Lull'd by the still and everlasting sameness,
Close to the Mansion, like domestic broods,
Fed with a 'shocking tameness.'

The coot was swimming in the reedy pond,
Beside the water-hen, so soon affrighted ;
And in the weedy moat the heron, fond
Of solitude, alighted.

The moping heron, motionless and stiff,
That on a stone, as silently and stilly,
Stood, an apparent sentinel, as if
To guard the water-lily.

No sound was heard except, from far away,
The ringing of the Whitwall's shrilly laughter,
Or, now and then, the chatter of the jay,
That Echo murmur'd after.

But Echo never mock'd the human tongue ;
Some weighty crime, that Heaven could not pardon,
A secret curse on that old Building hung,
And its deserted Garden.

The beds were all untouch'd by hand or tool ;
No footstep mark'd the damp and mossy gravel,
Each walk as green as is the mantled pool,
For want of human travel.

The vine unprun'd, and the neglected peach,
Droop'd from the wall with which they used to grapple ;
And on the canker'd tree, in easy reach,
Rotted the golden apple.

But awfully the truant shunn'd the ground,
The vagrant kept aloof, and daring Poacher,
In spite of gaps that thro' the fences round
Invited the encroacher.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

The pear and quince lay squander'd on the grass ;
The mould was purple with unheeded showers
Of bloomy plums—a Wilderness it was
Of fruits, and weeds, and flowers !

The marigold amidst the nettles blew,
The gourd embraced the rose bush in its ramble.
The thistle and the stock together grew,
The holly-hock and bramble.

The bear-bine with the lilac interlaced,
The sturdy bur-dock choked its slender neighbour,
The spicy pink. All tokens were effac'd
Of human care and labour.

The very yew Formality had train'd
To such a rigid pyramidal stature,
For want of trimming had almost regain'd
The raggedness of nature.

The Fountain was a-dry—neglect and time
Had marr'd the work of artisan and mason,
And efts and croaking frogs, begot of slime,
Sprawl'd in the ruin'd bason.

The Statue, fallen from its marble base,
Amidst the refuse leaves, and herbage rotten,
Lay like the Idol of some bygone race,
Its names and rites forgotten.

On ev'ry side the aspect was the same,
All ruin'd, desolate, forlorn, and savage :
No hand or foot within the precinct came
To rectify or ravage.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

PART II.

O, VERY gloomy is the House of Woe,
Where tears are falling while the bell is knelling,
With all the dark solemnities which show
That Death is in the dwelling !

O very, very dreary is the room
Where Love, domestic Love, no longer nestles,
But smitten by the common stroke of doom,
The Corpse lies on the trestles !

But House of Woe, and hearse, and sable pall,
The narrow home of the departed mortal,
Ne'er look'd so gloomy as that Ghostly Hall,
With its deserted portal !

The centipede along the threshold crept,
The cobweb hung across in mazy tangle,
And in its winding-sheet the maggot slept,
At every nook and angle.

The keyhole lodged the earwig and her brood,
The emmets of the steps had old possession,
And march'd in search of their diurnal food
In undisturb'd procession.

As undisturb'd as the prehensile cell
Of moth or maggot, or the spider's tissue,
For never foot upon that threshold fell,
To enter or to issue.

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear
The place is Haunted !

Howbeit, the door I pushed—or so I dream'd—
Which slowly, slowly gaped,—the hinges creaking
With such a rusty eloquence, it seem'd
That Time himself was speaking.

But Time was dumb within that Mansion old,
Or left his tale to the heraldic banners,
That hung from the corroded walls, and told
Of former men and manners :—

Those tatter'd flags, that with the open'd door,
Seem'd the old wave of battle to remember,
While fallen fragments danced upon the floor,
Like dead leaves in December.

The startled bats flew out—bird after bird—
The screech-owl overhead began to flutter,
And seem'd to mock the cry that she had heard
Some dying victim utter !

A shriek that echo'd from the joisted roof,
And up the stair, and further still and further,
Till in some ringing chamber far aloof
It ceased its tale of murder !

Meanwhile the rusty armour rattled round,
The banner shudder'd, and the ragged streamer ;
All things the horrid tenor of the sound
Acknowledged with a tremor.

The antlers, where the helmet hung and belt,
Stirr'd as the tempest stirs the forest branches,
Or as the stag had trembled when he felt
The blood-hound at his haunches.

The window jingled in its crumbled frame,
And thro' its many gaps of destitution
Dolorous moans and hollow sighings came,
Like those of dissolution.

The wood-louse dropped and rolled into a ball,
Touch'd by some impulse occult or mechanic ;
And nameless beetles ran along the wall
In universal panic.

The subtle spider, that from overhead
Hung like a spy on human guilt and error,
Suddenly turn'd, and up its slender thread
Ran with a nimble terror.

The very stains and fractures on the wall
Assuming features solemn and terrific,
Hinted some tragedy of that old Hall,
Lock'd up in Hieroglyphic.

Some tale that might, perchance, have solved the doubt,
Wherefore amongst those flags so dull and livid,
The banner of the Bloody Hand shone out
So ominously vivid.

Some key to that inscrutable appeal,
Which made the very frame of Nature quiver ;
And every thrilling nerve and fibre feel
So ague-like a shiver

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

If but a rat had lingered in the house,
To lure the thought into a social channel !
But not a rat remain'd, or tiny mouse,
To squeak behind the panel.

Huge drops roll'd down the walls, as if they wept ;
And where the cricket used to chirp so shrilly,
The toad was squatting, and the lizard crept
On that damp hearth and chilly.

For years no cheerful blaze had sparkled there,
Or glanc'd on coat of buff or knightly metal ;
The slug was crawling on the vacant chair,—
The snail upon the settle.

The floor was redolent of mould and must,
The fungus in the rotten seams had quicken'd ;
While on the oaken table coats of dust
Perennially had thickened

No mark of leathern jack or metal can,
No cup—no horn—no hospitable token—
All social ties between that board and Man
Had long ago been broken.

There was so foul a rumour in the air,
The shadow of a Presence so atrocious ;
No human creature could have feasted there,
Even the most ferocious.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

PART III.

'Tis hard for human actions to account,
Whether from reason or from impulse only—
But some internal prompting bade me mount
The gloomy stairs and lonely.

Those gloomy stairs, so dark, and damp, and cold,
With odours as from bones and relics carnal,
Deprived of rite, and consecrated mould,
The chapel vault, or charnel.

Those dreary stairs, where with the sounding stress
Of ev'ry step so many echoes blended,
The mind, with dark misgivings, fear'd to guess
How many feet ascended.

The tempest with its spoils had drifted in,
Till each unwholesome stone was darkly spotted,
As thickly as the leopard's dappled skin,
With leaves that rankly rotted.

The air was thick—and in the upper gloom
The bat—or something in its shape—was winging,
And on the wall, as chilly as a tomb,
The Death's Head moth was clinging.

That mystic moth, which, with a sense profound
Of all unholy presence, augurs truly;
And with a grim significance flits round
The taper burning bluely.

Such omens in the place there seem'd to be,
At ev'ry crooked turn, or on the landing,
The straining eyeball was prepared to see
Some Apparition standing.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted.

Yet no portentous Shape the sight amaz'd;
Each object plain, and tangible, and valid;
But from their tarnish'd frames dark Figures gaz'd,
And Faces spectre-pallid.

Not merely with the mimic life that lies
Within the compass of Art's simulation;
Their souls were looking thro' their painted eyes
With awful speculation.

On every lip a speechless horror dwelt;
On ev'ry brow the burthen of affliction;
The old Ancestral Spirits knew and felt
The House's malediction.

Such earnest woe their features overcast,
They might have stirr'd, or sigh'd, or wept, or spoken ;
But, save the hollow moaning of the blast,
The stillness was unbroken.

No other sound or stir of life was there,
Except my steps in solitary clamber,
From flight to flight, from humid stair to stair,
From chamber into chamber.

Deserted rooms of luxury and state,
That old magnificence had richly furnish'd
With pictures, cabinets of ancient date,
And carvings gilt and burnish'd.

Rich hangings, storied by the needle's art,
With scripture history, or classic fable ;
But all had faded, save one ragged part,
Where Cain was slaying Abel.

The silent waste of mildew and the moth
Had marr'd the tissue with a partial ravage ;
But undecaying frown'd upon the cloth
Each feature stern and savage.

The sky was pale ; the cloud a thing of doubt ;
Some hues were fresh, and some decay'd and duller ;
But still the BLOODY HAND shone strangely out
With vehemence of colour !

The BLOODY HAND that with a lurid stain
Shone on the dusty floor, a dismal token,
Projected from the casement's painted pane,
Where all beside was broken.

The BLOODY HAND significant of crime,
That glaring on the old heraldic banner,
Had kept its crimson unimpair'd by time,
In such a wondrous manner !

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

The Death Watch tick'd behind the panel'd oak,
Inexplicable tremors shook the arras,
And echoes strange and mystical awoke,
The fancy to embarrass.

Prophetic hints that filled the soul with dread,
But thro' one gloomy entrance pointing mostly,
The while some secret inspiration said
That Chamber is the Ghostly!

Across the door no gossamer festoon
Swung pendulous—no web—no dusty fringes,
No silky chrysalis or white cocoon
About its nooks and hinges.

The spider shunn'd the interdicted room,
The moth, the beetle, and the fly were banish'd,
And where the sunbeam fell athwart the gloom,
The very midge had vanish'd.

One lonely ray that glanc'd upon a Bed,
As if with awful aim direct and certain,
To show the BLOODY HAND in burning red
Embroider'd on the curtain.

And yet no gory stain was on the quilt—
The pillow in its place had slowly rotted;
The floor alone retain'd the trace of guilt,
Those boards obscurely spotted.

Obscurely spotted to the door, and thence
With mazy doubles to the grated casement—
Oh what a tale they told of fear intense,
Of horror and amazement!

What human creature in the dead of night
Had coursed like hunted hare that cruel distance?
Had sought the door, the window in his flight,
Striving for dear existence?

What shrieking Spirit in that bloody room
Its mortal frame had violently quitted?—
Across the sunbeam, with a sudden gloom,
A ghostly Shadow flitted.

Across the sunbeam, and along the wall,
But painted on the air so very dimly,
It hardly veil'd the tapestry at all,
Or portrait frowning grimly.

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is Haunted !

THE SONG OF THE SHIRT

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A Woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch ! stitch ! stitch !
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the 'Song of the Shirt !'

'Work ! work ! work !
While the cock is crowing aloof !
And work—work—work,
Till the stars shine through the roof !
It's O ! to be a slave
Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where woman has never a soul to save,
If this is Christian work !

'Work—work—work
Till the brain begins to swim ;
Work—work—work
Till the eyes are heavy and dim !
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream !

'O! Men with Sisters dear!

O! Men! with Mothers and wives
It is not linen you're wearing out,
But human creatures' lives!

Stitch—stitch—stitch,
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A Shroud as well as a Shirt.

'But why do I talk of Death?

That Phantom of grisly bone,
I hardly fear his terrible shape,

It seems so like my own—
It seems so like my own,
Because of the fasts I keep,
Oh! God! that bread should be so dear,
And flesh and blood so cheap!

'Work—work—work!

My labour never flags;
And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
A crust of bread—and rags.
That shatter'd roof,—and this naked floor—
A table—a broken chair—
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there!

'Work—work—work!

From weary chime to chime,
Work—work—work—
As prisoners work for crime!
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Till the heart is sick, and the brain benumb'd,
As well as the weary hand.

'Work—work—work,

In the dull December light,
And work—work—work,
When the weather is warm and bright—

While underneath the eaves
The brooding swallows cling
As if to show me their sunny backs
And twit me with the spring.

'Oh! but to breathe the breath
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet—
With the sky above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet,
For only one short hour
To feel as I used to feel,
Before I knew the woes of want
And the walk that costs a meal!

'Oh but for one short hour!
A respite however brief!
No blessed leisure for Love or Hope,
But only time for Grief!
A little weeping would ease my heart,
But in their briny bed
My tears must stop, for every drop
Hinders needle and thread!'

[Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Work, work, work,
Like the Engine that works by Steam!
A mere machine of iron and wood
That toils for Mammon's sake—
Without a brain to ponder and craze
Or a heart to feel—and break!]¹

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A Woman sate in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—

¹ The stanza in brackets was omitted when the 'Song' was originally published.

Stitch ! stitch ! stitch !

In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,
Would that its tone could reach the Rich !—
She sang this ‘Song of the Shirt !’

THE PAUPER’S CHRISTMAS CAROL.

FULL of drink and full of meat,
On our SAVIOUR’S natal day,
CHARITY’S perennial treat ;
Thus I heard a Pauper say :—
‘ Ought not I to dance and sing
Thus supplied with famous cheer ?

Heigho !

I hardly know—

Christmas comes but once a year !

‘ After labour’s long turmoil,
Sorry fare and frequent fast,
Two-and-fifty weeks of toil,
Pudding-time is come at last !
But are raisins high or low,
Flour and suet cheap or dear ?

Heigho !

I hardly know—

Christmas comes but once a year.

‘ Fed upon the coarsest fare
Three hundred days and sixty-four
But for *one* on viands rare,
Just as if I wasn’t poor !
Ought not I to bless my stars,
Warden, clerk, and overseer ?

Heigho !

I hardly know—

Christmas comes but once a year.

'Treated like a welcome guest,
 One of Nature's social chain,
 Seated, tended on, and press'd—
 But when shall I be press'd again,
 Twice to pudding, thrice to beef,
 A dozen times to ale and beer?

Heigho!

I hardly know,
 Christmas comes but once a year.

'Come to-morrow how it will;
 Diet scant and usage rough,
 Hunger once has had its fill,
 Thirst for once has had enough,
 But shall I ever dine again?
 Or see another feast appear?

Heigho!

I only know
 Christmas comes but once a year.

'Frozen cares begin to melt,
 Hopes revive and spirits flow—
 Feeling as I have not felt
 Since a dozen months ago—
 Glad enough to sing a song—
 To-morrow shall I volunteer?

Heigho!

I hardly know—
 Christmas comes but once a year.

'Bright and blessed is the time,
 Sorrows end and joys begin,
 While the bells with merry chime
 Ring the Day of Plenty in!
 But the happy tide to hail,
 With a sigh or with a tear,

Heigho!

I hardly know—
 Christmas comes but once a year!'

THE LADY'S DREAM

THE lady lay in her bed,
 Her couch so warm and soft,
 But her sleep was restless and broken still;
 For turning oft and oft
 From side to side, she mutter'd and moan'd,
 And toss'd her arms aloft.

At last she startled up,
 And gaz'd on the vacant air,
 With a look of awe, as if she saw
 Some dreadful phantom there—
 And then in the pillow she buried her face
 From visions ill to bear.

The very curtain shook,
 Her terror was so extreme;
 And the light that fell on the broider'd quilt
 Kept a tremulous gleam;
 And her voice was hollow, and shook as she cried:—
 'Oh me! that awful dream!

' That weary, weary walk
 In the churchyard's dismal ground!
 And those horrible things, with shady wings,
 That came and flitted round,—
 Death, death, and nothing but death,
 In every sight and sound!

' And oh! those maidens young,
 Who wrought in that dreary room,
 With figures drooping and spectres thin,
 And cheeks without a bloom;—
 And the Voice that cried, "For the pomp of pride,
 We haste to an early tomb!

" "For the pomp and pleasure of Pride,
 We toil like Afric slaves,
 And only to earn a home at last,
 Where yonder cypress waves;"—
 And then they pointed—I never saw
 A ground so full of graves!

' And still the coffins came,
With their sorrowful trains and slow;
Coffin after coffin still,
A sad and sickening show;
From grief exempt, I never had dreamt
Of such a World of Woe!

' Of the hearts that daily break,
Of the tears that hourly fall,
Of the many, many troubles of life,
That grieve this earthly ball—
Disease and Hunger, and Pain, and Want,
But now I dreamt of them all!

' For the blind and the cripple were there,
And the babe that pined for bread,
And the houseless man, and the widow poor
Who begged—to bury the dead;
The naked, alas, that I might have clad,
The famished I might have fed!

' The sorrow I might have soothed,
And the unregarded tears;
For many a thronging shape was there,
From long forgotten years,
Ay, even the poor rejected Moor,
Who rais'd my childish fears!

' Each pleading look, that long ago
I scann'd with a heedless eye,
Each face was gazing as plainly there,
As when I pass'd it by:
Woe, woe for me if the past should be
Thus present when I die!

' No need of sulphurous lake,
No need of fiery coal,
But only that crowd of human kind
Who wanted pity and dole—
In everlasting retrospect—
Will wring my sinful soul

' Alas ! I have walked through life
Too heedless where I trod ;
Nay, helping to trample my fellow worm,
And fill the burial sod—
Forgetting that even the sparrow falls
Not unmark'd of God !

' I drank the richest draughts ;
And ate whatever is good—
Fish, and flesh, and fowl, and fruit,
Supplied my hungry mood ;
But I never remembered the wretched ones
That starve for want of food !

' I dress'd as the noble dress,
In cloth of silver and gold,
With silk, and satin, and costly furs,
In many an ample fold ;
But I never imagined the naked limb
That froze with winter's cold.

' The wounds I might have heal'd !
The human sorrow and smart !
And yet it never was in my soul
To play so ill a part :
But evil is wrought by want of Thought,
As well as want of Heart !'

She clasp'd her fervent hands,
And the tears began to stream ;
Large, and bitter, and fast they fell,
Remorse was so extreme :
And yet, oh yet, that many a Dame
Would dream the Lady's Dream !

THE ASSISTANT DRAPERS' PETITION

'Now's the time and now's the hour.'—*Burns.*

'Seven's the main.'—*Crockford.*

PITY the sorrows of a class of men,
Who, though they bow to fashion and frivolity;
No fancied claims or woes fictitious pen,
But wrongs ell-wide, and of a lasting quality.

Oppress'd and discontented with our lot,
Amongst the clamorous we take our station
A host of Ribbon Men—yet is there not
One piece of Irish in our agitation.

We do revere Her Majesty the Queen,
We venerate our Glorious Constitution;
We joy King William's advent should have been,
And only want a Counter Revolution.

'Tis not Lord Russell and his final measure,
'Tis not Lord Melbourne's counsel to the throne,
'Tis not this Bill, or that gives us displeasure,
The measures we dislike are all our own.

The Cash Law the 'Great Western' loves to name,
The tone our foreign policy pervading;
The Corn Laws—none of these we care to blame,
Our evils we refer to over-trading.

By Tax or Tithe our murmurs are not drawn;
We reverence the Church—but hang the cloth!
We love her ministers—but curse the lawn!
We have, alas! too much to do with both!

We love the sex:—to serve them is a bliss!
We trust they find us civil, never surly;
All that we hope of female friends is this,
That their last linen may be wanted early.

Ah! who can tell the miseries of men
That serve the very cheapest shops in town?
Till faint and weary, they leave off at ten,
Knock'd up by ladies beating of 'em down!

162 THE ASSISTANT DRAPERS' PETITION

But has not Hamlet his opinion given—

O Hamlet had a heart for Drapers' servants!

'That custom is'—say custom after seven—

'More honour'd in the breach than the observance.'

O come then, gentle ladies, come in time,

O'erwhelm our counters, and unload our shelves;

Torment us all until the seventh chime,

But let us have the remnant to ourselves!

We wish of knowledge to lay in a stock,

And not remain in ignorance incurable;—

To study Shakspeare, Milton, Dryden, Locke,

And other fabrics that have proved so durable.

We long for thoughts of intellectual kind,

And not to go bewilder'd to our beds;

With stuff and fustian taking up the mind,

And pins and needles running in our heads!

For oh! the brain gets very dull and dry,

Selling from morn till night for cash or credit;

Or with a vacant face and vacant eye,

Watching cheap prints that Knight did never edit.

Till sick with toil, and lassitude extreme,

We often think, when we are dull and vapoury,

The bliss of Paradise was so supreme,

Because that Adam did not deal in drapery.

A DROP OF GIN

GIN! Gin! a Drop of Gin!

What magnified Monsters circle therein!

Ragged, and stained with filth and mud,

Some plague-spotted, and some with blood!

Shapes of Misery, Shame, and Sin!

Figures that make us loathe and tremble,

Creatures scarce human that more resemble

Broods of diabolical kin,

Ghoule and Vampyre, Demon and Jin!

Gin ! Gin ! a Drop of Gin !
The dram of Satan ! the liquor of Sin !—
Distill'd from the fell
Alembics of Hell,
By Guilt and Death, his own brother and twin !
That man might fall
Still lower than all
The meanest creatures with scale and fin.
But hold—we are neither Barebones nor Prynne,
Who lash'd with such rage
The sins of the age ;
Then, instead of making too much of a din,
Let Anger be mute,
And sweet Mercy dilute,
With a drop of Pity, the Drop of Gin !

Gin ! Gin ! a Drop of Gin !—
When darkly Adversity's day's set in,
And the friends and peers
Of earlier years
Prove warm without, but cold within,—
And cannot retrace
A familiar face
That's steep'd in poverty up to the chin ;—
But snub, neglect, cold-shoulder, and cut
The ragged pauper, misfortune's butt,
Hardly acknowledg'd by kith and kin,
Because, poor rat !
He has no cravat ;
A seedy coat, and a hole in that !—
No sole to his shoe, and no brim to his hat ;
Nor a change of linen—except his skin ;—
No gloves—no vest,
Either second or best ;
And what is worse than all the rest,
No light heart, tho' his breeches are thin,—
While Time elopes
With all golden hopes,
And even with those of pewter and tin,—

The brightest dreams,
 And the best of schemes,
 All knocked down, like a wicket by Mynn,—
 Each castle in air
 Seized by Giant Despair,
 No prospect in life worth a minikin pin,—
 No credit—no cash,
 No cold mutton to hash,
 No bread—not even potatoes to mash;
 No coal in the cellar, no wine in the binn,—
 Smash'd, broken to bits,
 With judgments and writs,
 Bonds, bills, and cognovits distracting the wits,
 In the webs that the spiders of Chancery spin,—
 Till weary of life, its worry and strife,
 Black visions are rife of a razor, a knife,
 Of poison—a rope—'louping over a linn.'—
 Gin! Gin! a Drop of Gin!
 Oh! then its tremendous temptations begin,
 To take, alas!
 To the fatal glass,—
 And happy the wretch that it does not win
 To change the black hue
 Of his ruin to blue—
 While Angels sorrow, and Demons grin—
 And lose the rheumatic
 Chill of his attic
 By plunging into the Palace of Gin!

THE WORKHOUSE CLOCK

AN ALLEGORY

THERE'S a murmur in the air,
 And noise in every street—
 The murmur of many tongues,
 The noise of numerous feet—
 While round the Workhouse door
 The Labouring Classes flock,
 For why? the Overseer of the Poor
 Is setting the Workhouse Clock.

Who does not hear the tramp
Of thousands speeding along
Of either sex and various stamp,
Sickly, crippled, or strong,
Walking, limping, creeping
From court, and alley, and lane,
But all in one direction sweeping
Like rivers that seek the main ?

Who does not see them sally
From mill, and garret, and room,
In lane, and court, and alley,
From homes in poverty's lowest valley,
Furnished with shuttle and loom—
Poor slaves of Civilization's galley—
And in the road and footways rally,
As if for the Day of Doom ?
Some, of hardly human form,
Stunted, crooked, and crippled by toil ;
Dingy with smoke and dust and oil,
And smirch'd besides with vicious soil,
Clustering, mustering, all in a swarm.
Father, mother, and careful child,
Looking as if it had never smiled—
The Sempstress, lean, and weary, and wan,
With only the ghosts of garments on—
The Weaver, her sallow neighbour,
The grim and sooty Artisan ;
Every soul—child, woman, or man,
Who lives—or dies—by labour.

Stirr'd by an overwhelming zeal,
And social impulse, a terrible throng !
Leaving shuttle, and needle, and wheel,
Furnace, and grindstone, spindle, and reel,
Thread, and yarn, and iron, and steel—
Yea, rest and the yet untasted meal—
Gushing, rushing, crushing along,
A very torrent of Man !

Urged by the sighs of sorrow and wrong,
Grown at last to a hurricane strong,
Stop its course who can !
Stop who can its onward course
And irresistible moral force ;
O ! vain and idle dream !
For surely as men are all akin,
Whether of fair or sable skin,
According to Nature's scheme,
That Human Movement contains within
A Blood-Power stronger than Steam.

Onward, onward, with hasty feet,
They swarm—and westward still—
Masses born to drink and eat,
But starving amidst Whitechapel's meat,
And famishing down Cornhill !
Through the Poultry—but still unfed—
Christian Charity, hang your head !
Hungry—passing the Street of Bread ;
Thirsty—the street of Milk ;
Ragged—beside the Ludgate Mart,
So gorgeous, through Mechanic-Art,
With cotton, and wool, and silk !

At last, before that door
That bears so many a knock
Ere ever it opens to Sick or Poor,
Like sheep they huddle and flock—
And would that all the Good and Wise
Could see the million of hollow eyes,
With a gleam deriv'd from Hope and the skies,
Upturn'd to the Workhouse Clock !

Oh ! that the Parish Powers,
Who regulate Labour's hours,
The daily amount of human trial,
Weariness, pain, and self-denial,
Would turn from the artificial dial

That striketh ten or eleven,
And go, for once, by that older one
That stands in the light of Nature's sun,
And takes its time from Heaven!

THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS

'Drown'd! drown'd!'—*Hamlet.*

ONE more Unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements;
Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.—

Touch her not scornfully;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;
Not of the stains of her,
All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful:
Past all dishonour
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family—
Wipe those poor lips of hers
Oozing so clammily.

Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,
Her fair auburn tresses :
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home ?

Who was her father ?
Who was her mother ?
Had she a sister ?
Had she a brother ?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other ?

Alas ! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun !
Oh ! it was pitiful !
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none !

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly,
Feelings had changed :
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence ;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver ;
But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river :

Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurl'd—
Anywhere, anywhere,
Out of the world!

In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran,—
Over the brink of it,
Picture it—think of it,
Dissolute man!
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly,
Decently,—kindly,—
Smoothe and compose them:
And her eyes, close them,
Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring
Thro' muddy impurity,
As when with the daring
Last look of despairing,
Fix'd on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,
Spurr'd by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest.—
Cross her hands humbly,
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast!

Owning her weakness,
Her evil behaviour,
And leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour!

THE LAY OF THE LABOURER

A SPADE! a rake! a hoe!
A pickaxe, or a bill!
A hook to reap, or a scythe to mow,
A flail, or what ye will—
And here's a ready hand
To ply the needful tool,
And skill'd enough, by lessons rough,
In Labour's rugged school.

To hedge, or dig the ditch,
To lop or fell the tree,
To lay the swarth on the sultry field,
Or plough the stubborn lea;
The harvest stack to bind,
The wheaten rick to thatch,
And never fear in my pouch to find
The tinder or the match.

To a flaming barn or farm
My fancies never roam;
The fire I yearn to kindle and burn
Is on the hearth of Home;
Where children huddle and crouch
Through dark long winter days,
Where starving children huddle and crouch,
To see the cheerful rays,
A-glowing on the haggard cheek,
And not in the haggard's blaze!

To Him who sends a drought
To parch the fields forlorn,
The rain to flood the meadows with mud,
The lights to blast the corn,

To Him I leave to guide
The bolt in its crooked path.
To strike the miser's rick, and show
The skies blood-red with wrath.

A spade ! a rake ! a hoe
A pickaxe, or a bill !
A hook to reap, or a scythe to mow,
A flail, or what ye will—
The corn to thrash, or the hedge to plash,
The market-team to drive,
Or mend the fence by the cover side,
And leave the game alive.

Ay, only give me work,
And then you need not fear
That I shall snare his worship's hare,
Or kill his grace's deer ;
Break into his lordship's house,
To steal the plate so rich ;
Or leave the yeoman that had a purse
To welter in a ditch.

Wherever Nature needs
Wherever Labour calls,
No job I'll shirk of the hardest work,
To shun the workhouse walls ;
Where savage laws begrudge
The pauper babe its breath,
And doom a wife to a widow's life,
Before her partner's death.

My only claim is this,
With labour stiff and stark,
By lawful turn, my living to earn,
Between the light and dark ;
My daily bread, and nightly bed,
My bacon, and drop of beer—
But all from the hand that holds the land,
And none from the overseer !

No parish money, or loaf,
No pauper badges for me,
A son of the soil, by right of toil
Entitled to my fee.

No alms I ask, give me my task :

Here are the arm, the leg,
The strength, the sinews of a Man,
To work, and not to beg.

Still one of Adam's heirs,

Though doom'd by chance of birth
To dress so mean, and to eat the lean
Instead of the fat of the earth ;

To make such humble meals

As honest labour can,
A bone and a crust, with a grace to God,
And little thanks to man !

A spade ! a rake ! a hoe !

A pickaxe, or a bill !
A hook to reap, or a scythe to mow,
A flail, or what ye will—

Whatever the tool to ply,

Here is a willing drudge,
With muscle and limb, and woo to him
Who does their pay begrudge !

Who every weekly score

Docks labour's little mite,
Bestows on the poor at the temple door,
But robb'd them over night.

The very shilling he hoped to save,

As health and morals fail,
Shall visit me in the New Bastille,
The Spital, or the Gaol !

STANZAS

FAREWELL, Life! My senses swim;
 And the world is growing dim;
 Thronging shadows cloud the light,
 Like the advent of the night,—
 Colder, colder, colder still
 Upward steals a vapour chill—
 Strong the earthy odour grows—
 I smell the Mould above the Rose!

Welcome, Life! the Spirit strives!
 Strength returns, and hope revives;
 Cloudy fears and shapes forlorn
 Fly like shadows at the morn,—
 O'er the earth there comes a bloom—
 Sunny light for sullen gloom,
 Warm perfume for vapour cold—
 I smell the Rose above the Mould!

ODE TO RAE WILSON, ESQ.

'Close, close your eyes with holy dread,
 And weave a circle round him thrice;
 For he on honey-dew hath fed,
 And drunk the milk of Paradise!'—*Coleridge.*

'It's very hard them kind of men
 Won't let a body be.'—*Old Ballad.*

A WANDERER, Wilson, from my native land,
 Remote, O Rae, from godliness and thee,
 Where rolls between us the eternal sea,
 Besides some furlongs of a foreign sand,—
 Beyond the broadest Scotch of London Wall;
 Beyond the loudest Saint that has a call;
 Across the wavy waste between us stretch'd,
 A friendly missive warns me of a stricture,
 Wherein my likeness you have darkly etch'd,
 And tho' I have not seen the shadow sketch'd,
 Thus I remark prophetic on the picture.

I guess the features:—in a line to paint
 Their moral ugliness, I'm not a saint.
 Not one of those self-constituted saints,
 Quacks—not physicians—in the cure of souls,
 Censors who sniff out mortal taints,
 And call the devil over his own coals—
 Those pseudo Privy Councillors of God,
 Who write down judgments with a pen hard-nibb'd;
 Ushers of Beelzebub's Black Rod,
 Commending sinners, not to ice thick-ribb'd,
 But endless flames, to scorch them up like flax,—
 Yet sure of heav'n themselves, as if they'd cribb'd
 Th' impression of St. Peter's keys in wax!

Of such a character no single trace
 Exists, I know, in my fictitious face;
 There wants a certain cast about the eye;
 A certain lifting of the nose's tip;
 A certain curling of the nether lip,
 In scorn of all that is, beneath the sky;
 In brief it is an aspect deleterious,
 A face decidedly not serious,
 A face profane, that would not do at all
 To make a face at Exeter Hall,—
 That Hall where bigots rant, and cant, and pray,
 And laud each other face to face,
 Till ev'ry farthing-candle ray
 Conceives itself a great gas-light of grace!

Well!—be the graceless lineaments confest!
 I do enjoy this bounteous beauteous earth;

 And dote upon a jest
 'Within the limits of becoming mirth';—
 No solemn sanctimonious face I pull,
 Nor think I'm pious when I'm only bilious—
 Nor study in my sanctum supercilious
 To frame a Sabbath Bill or forge a Bull.
 I pray for grace—repent each sinful act—
 Peruse, but underneath the rose, my Bible;
 And love my neighbour, far too well, in fact,
 To call and twit him with a godly tract

That's turn'd by application to a libel.
My heart ferments not with the bigot's leaven,
All creeds I view with toleration thorough,
And have a horror of regarding heaven
As anybody's rotten borough.

What else? no part I take in party fray,
With tropes from Billingsgate's slang-whanging tartars,
I fear no Pope—and let great Ernest play
At Fox and Goose with Fox's Martyrs!
I own I laugh at over-righteous men,
I own I shake my sides at ranters,
And treat sham-Abr'am saints with wicked banters,
I even own, that there are times—but then
It's when I've got my wine—I say d—— canters!

I've no ambition to enact the spy
On fellow souls, a Spiritual Pry—
'Tis said that people ought to guard their noses
Who thrust them into matters none of theirs;
And tho' no delicacy discomposes
Your Saint, yet I consider faith and pray'rs
Amongst the privatest of men's affairs.

I do not hash the Gospel in my books,
And thus upon the public mind intrude it,
As if I thought, like Otaheitan cooks,
No food was fit to eat till I had chew'd it.
On Bible stilts I don't affect to stalk;
Nor lard with Scripture my familiar talk,—

For man may pious texts repeat,
And yet religion have no inward seat;
'Tis not so plain as the old Hill of Howth,
A man has got his bellyfull of meat
Because he talks with victuals in his mouth!

Mere verbiage,—it is not worth a carrot!
Why, Socrates or Plato—where's the odds?—
Once taught a jay to supplicate the Gods,
And made a Polly-theist of a Parrot!

A mere professor, spite of all his cant, is
 Not a whit better than a Mantis,—
 An insect, of what clime I can't determine,
 That lifts its paws most parson-like, and thence,
 By simple savages—thro' sheer pretence—
 Is reckon'd quite a saint amongst the vermin.

But where's the reverence, or where the *nous*,
 To ride on one's religion thro' the lobby,

Whether as stalking-horse or hobby,
 To show its pious paces to 'the House'?
 I honestly confess that I would hinder
 The Scottish member's legislative rigs,
 That spiritual Pinder,

Who looks on erring souls as straying pigs,
 That must be lash'd by law, wherever found,
 And driv'n to church, as to the parish pound.
 I do confess, without reserve or wheedle,
 I view that grovelling idea as one
 Worthy some parish clerk's ambitious son
 A charity-boy who longs to be a beadle.

On such a vital topic sure 'tis odd
 How much a man can differ from his neighbour:
 One wishes worship freely giv'n to God,
 Another wants to make it statute-labour—
 The broad distinction in a line to draw,
 As means to lead us to the skies above,
 You say—Sir Andrew and his love of law,
 And I—the Saviour with his law of love.

Spontaneously to God should tend the soul,
 Like the magnetic needle to the Pole;
 But what were that intrinsic virtue worth,
 Suppose some fellow, with more zeal than knowledge,

Fresh from St. Andrew's college,
 Should nail the conscious needle to the north?

I do confess that I abhor and shrink
 From schemes, with a religious willy-nilly,
 That frown upon St. Giles's sins, but blink
 The peccadilloes of all Piccadilly—

My soul revolts at such a bare hypocrisy,
And will not, dare not, fancy in accord
The Lord of Hosts with an Exclusive Lord
Of this world's aristocracy.

It will not own a notion so unholy,
As thinking that the rich by easy trips
May go to heav'n, whereas the poor and lowly
Must work their passage, as they do in ships.

One place there is—beneath the burial sod
Where all mankind are equalized by death;
Another place there is—the Fane of God,
Where all are equal, who draw living breath;—
Juggle who will *elsewhere* with his own soul,
Playing the Judas with a temporal dole—
He who can come beneath that awful cope,
In the dread presence of a Maker just,
Who metes to ev'ry pinch of human dust
One even measure of immortal hope—
He who can stand within that holy door,
With soul unbow'd by that pure spirit-level,
And frame unequal laws for rich and poor,—
Might sit for Hell and represent the Devil!

Such are the solemn sentiments, O Rae,
In your last Journey-Work, perchance, you ravage,
Seeming, but in more courtly terms, to say
I'm but a heedless, creedless, godless savage;
A very Guy, deserving fire and faggots,—
A Scoffer, always on the grin,
And sadly given to the mortal sin
Of liking Mawworms less than merry maggots!

The humble records of my life to search,
I have not herded with mere pagan beasts;
But sometimes I have 'sat at good men's feasts,'
And I have been 'where bells have knoll'd to church.'
Dear bells! how sweet the sounds of village bells
When on the undulating air they swim!
Now loud as welcomes! faint, now, as farewells!
And trembling all about the breezy dells

As flutter'd by the wings of Cherubim.
 Meanwhile the bees are chanting a low hymn ;
 And lost to sight th' ecstatic lark above
 Sings like a soul beatified, of love,—
 With, now and then, the coo of the wild pigeon ;—
 O Pagans, Heathens, Infidels and Doubters !
 If such sweet sounds can't woo you to religion,
 Will the harsh voices of church cads and touters ?

A man may cry ' Church ! Church ! ' at ev'ry word,
 With no more piety than other people—
 A daw's not reckon'd a religious bird
 Because it keeps a-cawing from a steeple.
 The Temple is a good, a holy place,
 But quacking only gives it an ill savour ;
 While saintly mountebanks the porch disgrace,
 And bring religion's self into disfavour !

Behold yon servitor of God and Mammon,
 Who, binding up his Bible with his Ledger,
 Blends Gospel texts with trading gammon,
 A black-leg saint, a spiritual hedger,
 Who baeks his rigid Sabbath, so to speak,
 Against the wicked remnant of the week,
 A saving bet against his sinful bias—
 ' Rogue that I am,' he whispers to himself,
 ' I lie—I cheat—do anything for pelf,
 But who on earth can say I am not pious ? '
 In proof how over-righteousness re-acts,
 Accept an anecdote well bas'd on facts.

One Sunday morning—(at the day don't fret)—
 In riding with a friend to Ponder's End
 Outside the stage, we happen'd to commend
 A certain mansion that we saw To Let.
 ' Aye,' cried our coachman, with our talk to grapple,
 ' You're right ! no house along the road comes nigh it !
 'Twas built by the same man as built yon chapel,
 And master wanted once to buy it,—

But t'other driv the bargain much too hard—
He ax'd sure-ly a sum purdigious !
But being so particular religious,
Why, *that*, you see, put master on his guard !'

Church is 'a little heav'n below,
I have been there and still would go,'—
Yet I am none of those, who think it odd
A man can pray unbidden from the cassock,
And, passing by the customary hassock,
Kneel down remote upon the simple sod,
And sue in formâ pauperis to God.

As for the rest,—intolerant to none,
Whatever shape the pious rite may bear,
Ev'n the poor Pagan's homage to the Sun
I would not harshly scorn, lest even there
I spurn'd some elements of Christian pray'r—
An aim, tho' erring, at a 'world ayont'—
Acknowledgment of good—of man's futility,
A sense of need, and weakness, and indeed
That very thing so many Christians want—
Humility.

Such, unto Papists, Jews or turban'd Turks,
Such is my spirit—(I don't mean my wraith !)
Such, may it please you, is my humble faith ;
I know, full well, you do not like my *works* !

I have not sought, 'tis true, the Holy Land,
As full of texts as Cuddie Headrigg's mother,
The Bible in one hand,
And my own common-place-book in the other—
But you have been to Palestine—alas !
Some minds improve by travel, others, rather,
Resemble copper wire, or brass,
Which gets the narrower by going farther !
Worthless are all such Pilgrimages—very !
If Palmers at the Holy Tomb contrive
The human heats and rancour to revive
That at the Sepulchre they ought to bury.

A sorry sight it is to rest the eye on,
 To see a Christian creature graze at Sion,
 Then homeward, of the saintly pasture full,
 Rush bellowing, and breathing fire and smoke,
 At crippled Papistry to butt and poke,
 Exactly as a skittish Scottish bull
 Hunts an old woman in a scarlet cloak !

Why leave a serious, moral, pious home,
 Scotland, renown'd for sanctity of old,
 Far distant Catholics to rate and scold
 For—doing as the Romans do at Rome ?
 With such a bristling spirit wherefore quit
 The Land of Cakes for any land of wafers,
 About the graceless images to flit,
 And buzz and chafe importunate as chafers,
 Longing to carve the carvers to Scotch collops ?—
 People who hold such absolute opinions
 Should stay at home, in Protestant dominions,
 Not travel like male Mrs. Trollopes.

Gifted with noble tendency to climb,
 Yet weak at the same time,
 Faith is a kind of parasitic plant,
 That grasps the nearest stem with tendril-rings ;
 And as the climate and the soil may grant,
 So is the sort of tree to which it clings.
 Consider then, before, like Hurlothrumbo,
 You aim your club at any creed on earth,
 That, by the simple accident of birth,
 You might have been High Priest to Mumbo Jumbo.

For me—thro' heathen ignorance perchance,
 Not having knelt in Palestine,—I feel
 None of that griffinish excess of zeal,
 Some travellers would blaze with here in France.
 Dolls I can see in Virgin-like array,
 Nor for a scuffle with the idols hanker
 Like crazy Quixote at the puppet's play,
 If their 'offence be rank,' should mine be *rancour* ?

Mild light, and by degrees, should be the plan
To cure the dark and erring mind ;
But who would rush at a benighted man,
And give him two black eyes for being blind ?

Suppose the tender but luxuriant hop
Around a canker'd stem should twine,
What Kentish boor would tear away the prop
So roughly as to wound, nay, kill the bine ?
The images, 'tis true, are strangely dress'd,
With gauds and toys extremely out of season ;
The carving nothing of the very best,
The whole repugnant to the eye of reason,
Shocking to Taste, and to Fine Arts a treason—
Yet ne'er o'erlook in bigotry of sect
One truly *Catholic*, one common form,
At which uncheck'd

All Christian hearts may kindle or keep warm.

Say, was it to my spirit's gain or loss,
One bright and balmy morning, as I went
From Liege's lovely environs to Ghent,
If hard by the wayside I found a cross,
That made me breathe a pray'r upon the spot—
While Nature of herself, as if to trace
The emblem's use, had trail'd around its base
The blue significant Forget-Me-Not ?
Methought, the claims of Charity to urge
More forcibly, along with Faith and Hope,
The pious choice had pitch'd upon the verge

Of a delicious slope,

Giving the eye much variegated scope ;—
'Look round,' it whispered, 'on that prospect rare,
Those vales so verdant, and those hills so blue ;
Enjoy the sunny world, so fresh, and fair,
But'—(how the simple legend pierc'd me thro' !)

'PRIEZ POUR LES MALHEUREUX.'

With sweet kind natures, as in honey'd cells,
Religion lives, and feels herself at home ;
But only on a formal visit dwells
Where wasps instead of bees have form'd the comb.

Shun pride, O Rae!—whatever sort beside
 You take in lieu, shun spiritual pride!
 A pride there is of rank—a pride of birth,
 A pride of learning, and a pride of purse,
 A London pride—in short, there be on earth
 A host of prides, some better and some worse;
 But of all prides, since Lucifer's attaint,
 The proudest swells a self-elected Saint.

To picture that cold pride so harsh and hard,
 Fancy a peacock in a poultry yard.
 Behold him in conceited circles sail,
 Strutting and dancing, and now planted stiff,
 In all his pomp of pageantry as if
 He felt 'the eyes of Europe' on his tail!
 As for the humble breed retain'd by man,
 He scorns the whole domestic clan—
 He bows, he bridles,
 He wheels, he sidles,

At last, with stately dodgings, in a corner
 He pens a simple russet hen, to scorn her
 Full in the blaze of his resplendent fan!
 'Look here,' he cries (to give him words),
 'Thou feather'd clay—thou scum of birds!'

Flirting the rustling plumage in her eyes,—
 'Look here, thou vile predestin'd sinner,
 Doom'd to be roasted for a dinner,

Behold these lovely variegated dyes!
 These are the rainbow colours of the skies,
 That heav'n has shed upon me *con amore*—
 A Bird of Paradise?—a pretty story!
 I am that Saintly Fowl, thou paltry chick!

Look at my crown of glory!
 Thou dingy, dirty, drabbled, draggled jill!
 And off goes Partlet, wriggling from a kick,
 With bleeding scalp laid open by his bill!

That little simile exactly paints
 How sinners are despis'd by saints.

By saints!—the Hypocrites that ope heav'n's door
Obsequious to the sinful man of riches—
But put the wicked, naked, barelegg'd poor
In parish stocks instead of breeches.

The Saints!—the Bigots that in public spout,
Spread phosphorus of zeal on scraps of fustian,
And go like walking 'Lucifers' about
Mere living bundles of combustion.

The Saints!—the aping Fanatics that talk
All cant and rant, and rhapsodies high-flown—
That bid you baulk
A Sunday walk,
And shun God's work as you should shun your own.

The Saints!—the Formalists, the extra pious,
Who think the mortal husk can save the soul,
By trundling with a mere mechanic bias,
To church, just like a lignum-vitae bowl!

The Saints!—the Pharisees, whose beadle stands
Beside a stern coercive kirk.
A piece of human mason-work,
Calling all sermons contrabands,
In that great Temple that's not made with hands!

Thrice blessed, rather, is the man, with whom
The gracious prodigality of nature,
The balm, the bliss, the beauty, and the bloom,
The bounteous providence in ev'ry feature,
Recall the good Creator to his creature,
Making all earth a fane, all heav'n its dome!
To *his* tun'd spirit the wild heather-bells
Ring Sabbath knells;
The jubilate of the soaring lark
Is chaunt of clerk;
For choir, the thrush and the gregarious linnet;
The sod's a cushion for his pious want;
And, consecrated by the heav'n within it,
The sky-blue pool, a font.

Each cloud-capp'd mountain is a holy altar ;
 An organ breathes in every grove ;
 And the full heart 's a Psalter,
 Rich in deep hymns of gratitude and love !

Sufficiently by stern necessitarians
 Poor Nature, with her face begrim'd by dust,
 Is stok'd, cok'd, smok'd, and almost chok'd ; but must
 Religion have its own Utilitarians,
 Labell'd with evangelical phylacteries,
 To make the road to heav'n a railway trust,
 And churches—that 's the naked fact—mere factories ?

Oh ! simply open wide the Temple door,
 And let the solemn, swelling, organ greet,
 With *Voluntaries* meet,
 The *willing* advent of the rich and poor !
 And while to God the loud Hosannas soar,
 With rich vibrations from the vocal throng—
 From quiet shades that to the woods belong,
 And brooks with music of their own,
 Voices may come to swell the choral song
 With notes of praise they learn'd in musings lone.

How strange it is while on all vital questions,
 That occupy the House and public mind,
 We always meet with some humane suggestions
 Of gentle measures of a healing kind,
 Instead of harsh severity and vigour,
 The Saint alone his preference retains
 For bills of penalties and pains,
 And marks his narrow code with legal rigour !
 Why shun, as worthless of affiliation,
 What men of all political persuasion
 Extol—and even use upon occasion—
 That Christian principle, conciliation ?
 But possibly the men who make such fuss
 With Sunday pippins and old Trots infirm,
 Attach some other meaning to the term,
 As thus :

One market morning, in my usual rambles,
Passing along Whitechapel's ancient shambles,
Where meat was hung in many a joint and quarter,
I had to halt awhile, like other folks,

To let a killing butcher coax
A score of lambs and fatted sheep to slaughter.
A sturdy man he look'd to fell an ox,
Bull-fronted, ruddy, with a formal streak
Of well-greas'd hair down either cheek,
As if he dee-dash-dee'd some other flocks
Beside those woolly-headed stubborn blocks
That stood before him, in vexatious huddle—
Poor little lambs, with bleating wethers group'd,
While, now and then, a thirsty creature stoop'd
And meekly snuff'd, but did not taste the puddle.

Fierce bark'd the dog, and many a blow was dealt,
That loin, and chump, and scrag and saddle felt,
Yet still, that fatal step they all declin'd it,—
And shunn'd the tainted door as if they smelt
Onions, mint sauce, and lemon juice behind it.
At last there came a pause of brutal force,

The cur was silent, for his jaws were full
Of tangled locks of tarry wool,
The man had whoop'd and bellow'd till dead hoarse.
The time was ripe for mild expostulation,
And thus it stammer'd from a stander-by—
'Zounds!—my good fellow,—it quite makes me—why,
It really—my dear fellow—do just try
Conciliation!'

Stringing his nerves like flint,
The sturdy butcher seiz'd upon the hint,—
At least he seiz'd upon the foremost wether,—
And hugg'd and lugg'd and tugg'd him neck and crop
Just *volens volens* thro' the open shop—
If tails come off he didn't care a feather,—
Then walking to the door and smiling grim,
He rubb'd his forehead and his sleeve together—
'There!—I have conciliated him!'

Again—good-humouredly to end our quarrel—
 (Good humour should prevail !)
 I'll fit you with a tale,
 Whereto is tied a moral.

Once on a time a certain English lass
 Was seiz'd with symptoms of such deep decline,
 Cough, hectic flushes, ev'ry evil sign,
 That, as their wont is at such desperate pass,
 The Doctors gave her over—to an ass.

Accordingly, the grisly Shade to bilk,
 Each morn the patient quaff'd a frothy bowl
 Of asinine new milk,
 Robbing a shaggy suckling of a foal
 Which got proportionately spare and skinny—
 Meanwhile the neighbours cried 'poor Mary Ann !
 She can't get over it ! she never can !'
 When lo ! to prove each prophet was a ninny
 The one that died was the poor wet-nurse Jenny.

To aggravate the case,
 There were but two grown donkeys in the place ;
 And most unluckily for Eve's sick daughter,
 The other long-ear'd creature was a male,
 Who never in his life had given a pail
 Of milk, or even chalk and water.
 No matter : at the usual hour of eight
 Down trots a donkey to the wicket-gate,
 With Mister Simon Gubbins on its back,—
 ' Your sarvant, Miss,—a werry spring-like day,—
 Bad time for hasses tho' ! good lack ! good lack !
 Jenny be dead, Miss,—but I'ze brought ye Jack,
 He doesn't give no milk—but he can bray.'

So runs the story,
 And, in vain self-glory,
 Some Saints would sneer at Gubbins for his blindness—
 But what the better are their pious saws
 To ailing souls, than dry hee-haws,
 Without the milk of human kindness ?

MISS KILMANSEGG AND HER PRECIOUS LEG

A GOLDEN LEGEND

‘What is here ?

Gold ? yellow, glittering, precious gold ?’—

Timon of Athens.

Her Pedigree.

To trace the Kilmansegg pedigree,
To the very roots of the family tree,
Were a task as rash as ridiculous :
Through antediluvian mists as thick
As London fog such a line to pick
Were enough, in truth, to puzzle Old Nick,
Not to name Sir Harris Nicholas.

It wouldn’t require much verbal strain
To trace the Kill-man, perchance, to Cain ;
But waiving all such digressions,
Suffice it, according to family lore,
A Patriarch Kilmansegg lived of yore,
Who was famed for his great possessions,

Tradition said he feather’d his nest
Through an Agricultural Interest
In the Golden Age of Farming ;
When golden eggs were laid by the geese,
And Colchian sheep wore a golden fleece,
And golden pippins—the sterling kind
Of Hesperus—now so hard to find—
Made Horticulture quite charming !

A Lord of Land, on his own estate,
He lived at a very lively rate,
But his income would bear carousing ;
Such acres he had of pasture and heath,
With herbage so rich from the ore beneath,
The very ewes’ and lambkins’ teeth
Were turned into gold by browsing.

He gave, without any extra thrift,
A flock of sheep for a birthday gift
To each son of his loins, or daughter :
And his debts—if debts he had—at will
He liquidated by giving each bill
A dip in Pactolian water.

'Twas said that even his pigs of lead,
By crossing with some by Midas bred,
Made a perfect mine of his piggery.
And as for cattle, one yearling bull
Was worth all Smithfield-market full
Of the Golden Bulls of Pope Gregory.

The high-bred horses within his stud,
Like human creatures of birth and blood,
Had their Golden Cups and flagons :
And as for the common husbandry nags,
Their noses were tied in money-bags,
When they stopp'd with the carts and waggons.

Moreover, he had a Golden Ass,
Sometimes at stall, and sometimes at grass,
That was worth his own weight in money—
And a golden hive on a Golden Bank,
Where golden bees by alchemical prank
Gather'd gold instead of honey.

Gold ! and gold ! and gold without end !
He had gold to lay by, and gold to spend,
Gold to give, and gold to lend,
And reversions of gold in futuro.
In wealth the family revell'd and roll'd ;
Himself and wife and sons so bold ;
And his daughters sang to their harps of gold
'O bella età del' oro !'

Such was the tale of the Kilmansegg Kin,
In golden text on a vellum skin,
Though certain people would wink and grin,
And declare the whole story a parable—

That the Ancestor rich was one Jacob Ghrimes,
Who held a long lease, in prosperous times,
Of acres, pasture and arable.

That as money makes money his golden bees
Were the five per cents, or which you please,
When his cash was more than plenty—
That the golden cups were racing affairs;
And his daughters, who sang Italian airs,
Had their golden harps of Clementi.

That the Golden Ass, or Golden Bull,
Was English John with his pockets full,
Then at war by land and water:
While beef, and mutton, and other meat,
Were almost as dear as money to eat,
And Farmers reaped Golden Harvests of wheat,
At the Lord knows what per quarter!

Her Birth.

What different dooms our birthdays bring!
For instance, one little mannikin thing
Survives to wear many a wrinkle;
While Death forbids another to wake,
And a son that it took nine moons to make,
Expires without even a twinkle!

Into this world we come like ships,
Launch'd from the docks, and stocks, and slips,
For fortune fair or fatal;
And one little craft is cast away,
In its very first trip in Babbicome Bay,
While another rides safe at Port Natal.

What different lots our stars accord!
This babe to be hail'd and woo'd as a Lord,
And that to be shunned like a leper!
One, to the world's wine, honey, and corn,
Another, like Colchester native, born
To its vinegar, only, and pepper.

One is littered under a roof
Neither wind nor water proof,—
That's the prose of Love in a Cottage—
A puny, naked, shivering wretch,
The whole of whose birthright would not fetch,
Though Robins himself drew up the sketch,
The bid of 'a mess of pottage.'

Born of Fortunatus's kin,
Another comes tenderly usher'd in
To a prospect all bright and burnish'd:
No tenant he, for life's back slums—
He comes to the world as a gentleman comes
To a lodging ready furnish'd.

And the other sex—the tender—the fair—
What wide reverses of fate are there!
While Margaret, charm'd by the Bulbul rare,
In a garden of Gul reposes—
Poor Peggy hawks nosegays from street to street,
Till—think of that, who find life so sweet!—
She hates the smell of roses!

Not so with the infant Kilmansegg!
She was not born to steal or beg,
Or gather cresses in ditches;
To plait the straw or bind the shoe,
Or sit all day to hem and sew,
As females must, and not a few—
To fill their insides with stitches!

She was not doom'd for bread to eat
To be put to her hands as well as her feet—
To carry home linen from mangles—
Or heavy-hearted, and weary-limb'd,
To dance on a rope in a jacket trimm'd
With as many blows as spangles.

She was one of those who by Fortune's boon
Are born, as they say, with a silver spoon
In her mouth, not a wooden ladle:

To speak according to poet's wont,
Plutus as sponsor stood at her font,
And Midas rock'd the cradle.
At her first *debut* she found her head
On a pillow of down, in a downy bed,
With a damask canopy over.
For although by the vulgar popular saw,
All mothers are said to be 'in the straw,'
Some children are born in clover.
Her very first thought of vital air,
It was not the common chameleon fare
Of Plebeian lungs and noses,—
No—her earliest sniff
Of this world was a whiff
Of the genuine Otto of Roses !
When she saw the light—it was no mere ray
Of that light so common—so every-day—
That the sun each morning launches—
But six wax tapers dazzled her eyes,
From a thing—a gooseberry bush for size—
With a golden stem and branches.
She was born exactly at half-past two,
As witness'd a timepiece in or-molu
That stood on a marble table—
Showing at once the time of day,
And a team of *Gildings* running away
As fast as they were able,
With a golden God with a golden Star,
And a golden spear in a golden Car
According to Grecian fable.
Like other babes, at her birth she cried,
Which made a sensation far and wide,
Ay, for twenty miles around her ;
For though to the ear 'twas nothing more
Than an infant's squall, it was really the roar
Of a Fifty-thousand Pounder !
It shook the next heir
In his library chair,
And made him cry, 'Confound her !'

Of signs and omens there was no dearth,
Any more than at Owen Glendower's birth,
Or the advent of other great people :
Two bullocks dropp'd dead,
As if knock'd on the head,
And barrels of stout
And ale ran about,
And the village-bells such a peal rang out,
That they cracked the village steeple.

In no time at all, like mushroom spawn,
Tables sprang up all over the lawn ;

Not furnish'd scantily or shabbily,

But on scale as vast

As that huge repast,

With its loads and cargoes

Of drink and botargoes,

At the Birth of the Babe in Rabelais.

Hundreds of men were turn'd into beasts,

Like the guests at Circe's horrible feasts,

By the magic of ale and cider :

And each country lass, and each country lad,

Began to caper and dance like mad,

And even some old ones appear'd to have had

A bite from the Naples Spider.

Then as night came on,

It had scared King John,

Who considered such signs not risible,

To have seen the maroons,

And the whirling moons,

And the serpents of flame,

And wheels of the same,

That according to some were ' whizzable.'

Oh, happy Hope of the Kilmanseggs !

Thrice happy in head, and body, and legs,

That her parents had such full pockets !

For had she been born of Want and Thrift,

For care and nursing all adrift,

It's ten to one she had had to make shift

With rickets instead of rockets !

And how was the precious Baby drest ?
In a robe of the East, with lace of the West,
Like one of Cræsus's issue—
Her best bibs were made
Of rich gold brocade,
And the others of silver tissue.

And when the Baby inclined to nap,
She was lull'd on a Gros de Naples lap,
By a nurse, in a modish Paris cap,
Of notions so exalted,
She drank nothing lower than Curaçoa,
Maraschino, or pink Noyau,
And on principle never malted.

From a golden boat, with a golden spoon,
The babe was fed night, morning, and noon ;
And altho' the tale seems fabulous,
'Tis said her tops and bottoms were gilt,
Like the oats in that Stable-yard Palace built
For the Horse of Heliogabalus.

And when she took to squall and kick,
For pain will wring, and pins will prick,
E'en the wealthiest nabob's daughter ;—
They gave her no vulgar Dalby or gin,
But a liquor with leaf of gold therein,
Videlicet—Dantzic Water.

In short, she was born, and bred, and nurst,
And drest in the best from the very first,
To please the genteelest censor—
And then, as soon as strength would allow,
Was vaccinated, as babes are now,
With virus ta'en from the best-bred cow
Of Lord Althorpe's—now Earl Spencer.

Her Christening.

Though Shakespeare asks us, ' What 's in a name ? '
(As if cognomens were much the same),
There 's really a very great scope in it.

A name?—why, wasn't there Doctor Dodd,
That servant at once of Mammon and God,
Who found four thousand pounds and odd,
A prison—a cart—and a rope in it?

A name?—if the party had a voice,
What mortal would be a Bugg by choice,
As a Hogg, a Grubb, or a Chubb rejoice,
Or any such nauseous blazon?
Not to mention many a vulgar name,
That would make a doorplate blush for shame,
If doorplates were not so brazen!

A name?—it has more than nominal worth,
And belongs to good or bad luck at birth—
As dames of a certain degree know,
In spite of his Page's hat and hose,
His Page's jacket and buttons in rows,
Bob only sounds like a page of prose
Till turn'd into Rupertino.

Now to christen the infant Kilmansegg,
For days and days it was quite a plague,
To hunt the list in the Lexicon:
And scores were tried like coin by the ring,
Ere names were found just the proper thing
For a minor rich as a Mexican.

Then cards were sent, the presence to beg
Of all the kin of Kilmansegg,

White, yellow, and brown relations:
Brothers, Wardens of City Halls,
And Uncles—rich as three Golden Balls
From taking pledges of nations.

Nephews, whom Fortune seem'd to bewitch,
Rising in life like rockets—

Nieces whose dowries knew no hitch—
Aunts as certain of dying rich

As candles in golden sockets—
Cousins German and cousins' sons,
All thriving and opulent—some had tons
Of Kentish hops in their pockets!

For money had stuck to the race thro' life
(As it did to the bushel when cash so rife
Posed Ali Baba's brother's wife)—

And down to the Cousins and Cozlings,
The fortunate brood of the Kilmanseggs,
As if they had come out of golden eggs
Were all as wealthy as 'Goslings.'

It would fill a Court Gazette to name
What East and West End people came

To the rite of Christianity:
The lofty Lord and the titled Dame,
All di'monds, plumes, and urbanity:
His Lordship the May'r with his golden chain,
And two Gold Sticks, and the Sheriffs twain,
Nine foreign Counts, and other great men
With their orders and stars, to help M or N
To renounce all pomp and vanity.

To paint the maternal Kilmansegg,
The pen of an Eastern Poet would beg,
And need an elaborate sonnet;
How she sparkled with gems whenever she stirr'd,
And her head niddle-noddled at every word,
And seem'd so happy, a Paradise Bird
Had nidificated upon it.

And Sir Jacob the Father strutted and bow'd,
And smiled to himself, and laugh'd aloud,
To think of his heiress and daughter—
And then in his pockets he made a grope,
And then, in the fulness of joy and hope,
Seem'd washing his hands with invisible soap,
In imperceptible water.

He had roll'd in money like pigs in mud,
Till it seem'd to have enter'd into his blood

By some occult projection:
And his cheeks, instead of a healthy hue,
As yellow as any guinea grew,
Making the common phrase seem true
About a rich complexion.

And now came the Nurse, and during a pause,
Her dead-leaf satin would fitly cause

A very autumnal rustle—
So full of figure, so full of fuss,
As she carried about the babe to buss,
She seem'd to be nothing but bustle.

A wealthy Nabob was Godpapa,
And an Indian Begum was Godmamma,
Whose jewels a Queen might covet—
And the Priest was a Vicar, and Dean withal
Of that Temple we see with a Golden Ball,
And a Golden Cross above it.

The Font was a bowl of American gold,
Won by Raleigh in days of old,

In spite of Spanish bravado ;
And the Book of Pray'r was so overrun
With gilt devices, it shone in the sun,
Like a copy—a presentation one—

Of Humboldt's 'El Dorado.'

Gold ! and Gold ! and nothing but gold !
The same auriferous shine behold

Wherever the eye could settle !
On the walls—the sideboard—the ceiling-sky—
On the gorgeous footmen standing by,
In coats to delight a miner's eye,

With seams of the precious metal.

Gold ! and gold ! and besides the gold,
The very robe of the infant told
A tale of wealth in every fold ;

It lapp'd her like a vapour !
So fine ! so thin ! the mind at a loss
Could compare it to nothing, except a cross
Of cobwebs with bank-note paper.

Then her pearls—'twas a perfect sight, forsooth,
To see them, like 'the dew of her youth,'

In such a plentiful sprinkle.
Meanwhile, the Vicar read through the form,
And gave her another, not overwarm,
That made her little eyes twinkle.

Then the babe was cross'd, and bless'd amain,
But instead of the Kate, or Ann, or Jane,
Which the humbler female endorses,
Instead of one name, as some people prefix,
Kilmansegg went at the tails of six,
Like a carriage of state with its horses.

Oh, then the kisses she got and hugs !
The golden mugs and the golden jugs,
That lent fresh rays to the midges !
The golden knives, and the golden spoons,
The gems that sparkled like fairy boons,
It was one of the Kilmanseggs' own saloons,
But looked like Rundell and Bridge's !

Gold ! and gold ! the new and old !
The company ate and drank from gold,
They revell'd, they sang, and were merry ;
And one of the Gold Sticks rose from his chair,
And toasted ' the Lass with the golden hair '
In a bumper of golden Sherry.

Gold ! still gold ! it rain'd on the Nurse,
Who, unlike Danæ, was none the worse ;
There was nothing but guineas glistening !
Fifty were given to Doctor James
For calling the little Baby names,
And for saying, Amen !
The Clerk had ten,
And that was the end of the Christening.

Her Childhood.

Our youth ! our childhood ! that spring of springs !
'Tis surely one of the blesseddest things
That nature ever invented !
When the rich are wealthy beyond their wealth,
And the poor are rich in spirits and health,
And all with their lots contented !

There's little Phelim, he sings like a thrush,
In the selfsame pair of patchwork plush,
With the selfsame empty pockets,
That tempted his daddy so often to cut
His throat, or jump in the water-butt.—
But what cares Phelim? an empty nut
Would sooner bring tears to their sockets.

Give him a collar without a skirt,
That's the Irish linen for shirt,
And a slice of bread, with a taste of dirt,
That's Poverty's Irish butter.
And what does he lack to make him blest?
Some oyster-shells, or a sparrow's nest,
A candle-end and a gutter.

But to leave the happy Phelim alone,
Gnawing, perchance, a marrowless bone,
For which no dog would quarrel—
Turn we to little Miss Kilmansegg,
Cutting her first little toothy-peg
With a fifty-guinea coral—
A peg upon which
About poor and rich
Reflection might hang a moral.

Born in wealth and wealthily nursed,
Capp'd, papp'd, napp'd, and lapp'd from the first
On the knees of Prodigality.
Her childhood was one eternal round
Of the game of going on Tickler's ground,
Picking up gold—in reality.

With extempore carts she never play'd,
Or the odds and ends of a Tinker's trade,
Or little dirt pies and puddings made,
Like children happy and squalid;
The very puppet she had to pet,
Like a bait for the 'Nix my Dolly' set,
Was a Dolly of gold—and solid!

Gold! and gold! 'twas the burden still!
To gain the Heiress's early goodwill
There was much corruption and bribery—
The yearly cost of her golden toys
Would have given half London's Charity Boys
And Charity Girls the annual joys
Of a holiday dinner at Highbury.

Bon-bons she ate from the gilt *cornet*;
And gilded queens on St. Bartlemy's day;
Till her fancy was tinged by her presents—
And first a Goldfish excited her wish,
Then a spherical bowl with its Golden fish,
And then two Golden Pheasants.

Nay, once she squall'd and scream'd like wild—
And it shows how the bias we give to a child
Is a thing most weighty and solemn;—
But whence was wonder or blame to spring,
If little Miss K.,—after such a swing—
Made a dust for the flaming gilded thing
On the top of the Fish-street column?

Her Education.

According to metaphysical creed,
To the earliest books that children read
For much good or much bad they are debtors;
But before with their A B C they start,
There are things in morals as well as art,
That play a very important part—
'Impressions before the letters.'

Dame Education begins the pile,
Mayhap in the graceful Corinthian style,
But alas for the elevation!
If the Lady's maid or Gossip the Nurse
With a load of rubbish, or something worse.
Have made a rotten foundation.

Even thus with little Miss Kilmansegg,
Before she learnt her E for egg,
Ere her Governess came, or her Masters—

Teachers of quite a different kind
Had 'cramm'd' her beforehand, and put her mind
In a go-cart on golden castors.

Long before her A B and C,
They had taught her by heart her L. S. D.,
And as how she was born a great Heiress ;
And as sure as London is built of bricks,
My Lord would ask her the day to fix,
To ride in a fine gilt coach and six,
Like her Worship the Lady May'ress.

Instead of stories from Edgeworth's page
The true golden lore for our golden age,
Or lessons from Barbauld and Trimmer,
Teaching the worth of Virtue and Health,
All that she knew was the Virtue of Wealth,
Provided by vulgar nursery stealth
With a Book of Leaf Gold for a Primer.

The very metal of merit they told,
And prais'd her for being as 'good as gold'
Till she grew as a peacock haughty ;
Of money they talked the whole day round,
And weigh'd desert like grapes by the pound,
Till she had an idea from the very sound
That people with naught were naughty.

They praised—poor children with nothing at all !
Lord ! how you twaddle and waddle and squall,
Like common-bred geese and ganders !
What sad little bad little figures you make
To the rich Miss K., whose plainest seed-cake
Was stuff'd with corianders !

They prais'd her falls, as well as her walk.
Flatterers make cream cheese of chalk,
They prais'd—how they prais'd—her very small
talk,

As if it fell from a Solon ;
Or the girl who at each pretty phrase let drop
A ruby comma, a pearl full-stop,
And an emerald semi-colon.

They prais'd her spirit, and now and then,
The Nurse brought her own little 'nevy' Ben,
To play with the future May'ress,
And when he got raps, and taps, and slaps,
Scratches, and pinches, snips, and snaps,
As if from a Tigress or Bearess,
They told him how lords would court that hand,
And always gave him to understand,
While he rubbed, poor soul !
His carroty poll,
That his hair had been pulled by 'a *Hairess*.'

Such were the lessons from maid and nurse,
A Governess helped to make still worse,
Giving an appetite so perverse
Fresh diet whereon to batten—
Beginning with A B C to hold
Like a royal play-bill printed in gold
On a square of pearl-white satin.

The books to teach the verbs and nouns,
And those about countries, cities, and towns,
Instead of their sober drabs and browns,
Were in crimson silk, with gilt edges ;—
Her Butler and Enfield and Entick—in short
Her 'Early Lessons' of every sort,
Looked like Souvenirs, Keepsakes, and Pledges.

Old Johnson shone out in as fine array
As he did one night when he went to the play ;
Chambaud like a beau of King Charles's day—
Lindley Murray in like conditions—
Each weary, unwelcome, irksome task,
Appear'd in a fancy dress and a mask—
If you wish for similar copies ask
For Howell and James's Editions.

Novels she read to amuse her mind,
But always the affluent match-making kind
That ends with Promessi Sposi,
And a father-in-law so wealthy and grand

He could give cheque-mate to Coutts in the Strand;
So along with a ring and posy,
He endows the Bride with Golconda offhand,
And gives the Groom Potosi.

Plays she perused—but she liked the best
Those comedy gentlefolks always possessed
Of fortunes so truly romantic—
Of money so ready that right or wrong
It always is ready to go for a song,
Throwing it, going it, pitching it strong—
They ought to have purses as green and long
As the cucumber called the Gigantic.

Then Eastern Tales she loved for the sako
Of the Purse of Oriental make,
And the thousand pieces they put in it—
But pastoral scenes on her heart fell cold,
For Nature with her had lost its hold,
No field but the Field of the Cloth of Gold
Would ever have caught her foot in it

What more ? She learned to sing, and dance,
To sit on a horse, although he should prance,
And to speak a French not spoken in France
Any more than at Babel's building—
And she painted shells, and flowers, and Turks,
But her great delight was in Fancy Works
That are done with gold or gilding.

Gold ! still gold !—the bright and the dead,
With golden beads, and gold lace, and gold thread,
She work'd in gold as if for her bread,
The metal had so undermined her—
Gold ran in her thoughts and fill'd her brain,
She was golden-headed as Peter's cane
With which he walked behind her.

Her Accident.

The horse that carried Miss Kilmansegg,
And a better never lifted leg,

Was a very rich bay, called Banker—
A horse of a breed and a mettle so rare,—
By Bullion out of an Ingot mare,—
That for action, the best of figures, and air,
It made many good judges hanker.

And when she took a ride in the Park,
Equestrian Lord, or pedestrian Clerk,
Was thrown in an amorous fever,
To see the heiress how well she sat,
With her groom behind her, Bob or Nat,
In green, half smother'd with gold, and a hat
With more gold lace than beaver.

And then when Banker obtained a pat,
To see how he arch'd his neck at that!
He snorted with pride and pleasure!
Like the Steed in the fable so lofty and grand,
Who gave the poor Ass to understand,
That *he* didn't carry a bag of sand,
But a burden of golden treasure.

A load of treasure?—alas! alas!
Had her horse but been fed upon English grass
And sheltered in Yorkshire spinneys,
Had he scour'd the sand with the Desert Ass,
Or where the American whinnies,—
But a hunter from Erin's turf and gorse,
A regular thorough-bred Irish horse,
Why, he ran away, as a matter of course,
With a girl worth her weight in guineas!

Mayhap 'tis the trick of such pamper'd nags
To shy at the sight of a beggar in rags;
But away, like the bolt of a rabbit,

Away went the horse in the madness of fright,
And away went the horsewoman mocking the
sight—

Was yonder blue flash a flash of blue light,
Or only the skirt of her habit ?

Away she flies, with the groom behind,—
It looks like a race of the Calmuck kind,

When Hymen himself is the starter :
And the Maid rides first in the four-footed strife,
Riding, striding, as if for her life,
While the Lover rides after to catch him a wife,
Although it's catching a Tartar.

But the Groom has lost his glittering hat !
Though he does not sigh and pull up for that—
Alas ! his horse is a tit for Tatt,

To sell to a very low bidder—
His wind is ruin'd, his shoulder is sprung,
Things, though a horse be well-bred and young,
A purchaser *will* consider.

But still flies the heiress through stones and dust,
Oh, for a fall, if fall she must,

On the gentle lap of Flora !
But still, thank Heaven ! she clings to her seat—
Away ! away ! she could ride a dead heat
With the Dead who ride so fast and fleet,
In the Ballad of Leonora !

Away she gallops !—it's awful work !
It's faster than Turpin's ride to York,

On Bess that notable clipper !
She has circled the Ring !—she crosses the Park !
Mazeppa, although he was stripp'd so stark,
Mazeppa couldn't outstrip her !

The fields seem running away with the folks !
The Elms are having a race for the Oaks !

At a pace that all Jockeys disparages !
All, all is racing ! the Serpentine
Seems rushing past like the 'arrowy Rhine'
The houses have got on a railway line,
And are off like the first-class carriages !

She'll lose her life ! she is losing her breath !
A cruel chase, she is chasing Death,
As female shriekings forewarn her :
And now—as gratis as blood of Guelph—
She clears that gate, which has cleared itself
Since then, at Hyde Park Corner !

Alas ! for the hope of the Kilmanseggs !
For her head, her brains, her body, and legs,
Her life's not worth a copper !

Willy-nilly,
In Piccadilly,
A hundred hearts turn sick and chilly,
A hundred voices cry, 'Stop her !'
And one old gentleman stares and stands,
Shakes his head and lifts his hands,
And says, 'How very improper !'

On and on !—what a perilous run !
The iron rails seem all mingling in one,
To shut out the Green Park scenery !
And now the Cellar its dangers reveals,
She shudders—sheshrieks—she's doom'd, she feels,
To be torn by powers of horses and wheels,
Like a spinner by steam machinery !

Sick with horror she shuts her eyes,
But the very stones seem uttering cries,
As they did to that Persian daughter,
When she climb'd up the steep vociferous hill,
Her little silver flagon to fill
With the magical Golden Water !

'Batter her ! shatter her !
Throw and scatter her !'
Shouts each stony-hearted chatterer !
'Dash at the heavy Dover !
Spill her ! kill her ! tear and tatter her !
Smash her ! crash her !' (the stones didn't flatter
her !)
'Kick her brains out ! let her blood spatter her !
Roll on her over and over !'

For so she gathered the awful sense
 Of the street in its past unmacadamiz'd tense,
 As the wild horse overran it,—
 His four heels making the clatter of six,
 Like a Devil's tattoo, play'd with iron sticks
 On a kettle-drum of granite!

On! still on! she's dazzled with hints
 Of oranges, ribbons, and colour'd prints,
 A Kaleidoscope jumble of shapes and tints,
 And human faces all flashing,
 Bright and brief as the sparks from the flints,
 That the desperate hoof keeps dashing!

On and on! still frightfully fast!
 Dover-street, Bond-street, all are past!
 But—yes—no—yes!—they're down at last!
 The Furies and Fates have found them!
 Down they go with a sparkle and crash,
 Like a Bark that's struck by the lightning flash—
 There's a shriek—and a sob—
 And the dense dark mob
 Like a billow closes around them!

* * * * *

'She breathes!'

'She don't!'

'She'll recover!'

'She won't!'

'She's stirring! she's living, by Nemesis!'
 Gold, still gold! on counter and shelf!
 Golden dishes as plenty as delf!
 Miss Kilmansegg's coming again to herself
 On an opulent Goldsmith's premises!
 Gold! fine gold!—both yellow and red,
 Beaten, and molten—polish'd, and dead—
 To see the gold with profusion spread
 In all forms of its manufacture!
 But what avails gold to Miss Kilmansegg,
 When the femoral bone of her dexter leg
 Has met with a compound fracture?

Gold may soothe Adversity's smart;
Nay, help to bind up a broken heart;
But to try it on any other part
Were as certain a disappointment,
As if one should rub the dish and plate,
Taken out of a Staffordshire crate—
In the hope of a Golden Service of State—
With Singleton's 'Golden Ointment.'

Her Precious Leg.

As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined,
Is an adage often recall'd to mind,
Referring to juvenile bias:
And never so well is the verity seen,
As when to the weak, warp'd side we lean,
While Life's tempests and hurricanes try us.

Even thus with Miss K. and her broken limb,
By a very, very remarkable whim,

She show'd her early tuition:
While the buds of character came into blow
With a certain tinge that served to show
The nursery culture long ago,
As the graft is known by fruition!

For the King's Physician, who nursed the case,
His verdict gave with an awful face,

And three others concurr'd to egg it:
That the Patient to give old Death the slip,
Like the Pope, instead of a personal trip,
Must send her Leg as a Legate.

The limb was doom'd—it couldn't be saved!
And like other people the patient behaved,
Nay, bravely that cruel parting braved,
Which makes some persons so falter
They rather would part without a groan,
With the flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone,
They obtained at St. George's altar.

But when it came to fitting the stump
With a proxy limb—then flatly, and plump
She spoke, in the spirit olden ;
She couldn't—she shouldn't—she wouldn't have
wood !

Nor a leg of cork, if she never stood,
And she swore an oath, or something as good,
The proxy limb should be golden !

A wooden leg ! what, a sort of peg,
For your common Jockeys and Jennies !
No, no, her mother might worry and plague—
Weep, go down on her knees, and beg,
But nothing would move Miss Kilmansegg !
She could—she would have a Golden Leg,
If it cost ten thousand guineas !

Wood indeed, in Forest or Park,
With its sylvan honours and feudal bark,
Is an aristocratical article ;
But split and sawn, and hack'd about town,
Serving all needs of pauper or clown,
Trode on ! staggered on ! Wood cut down
Is vulgar—fibre and particle !

And Cork !—when the noble Cork Tree shades
A lovely group of Castilian maids,
'Tis a thing for a song or sonnet !—
But cork, as it stops the bottle of gin,
Or bungs the beer—the *small* beer !—in—
It pierced her heart like a corking-pin,
To think of standing upon it !

A Leg of Gold—solid gold throughout,
Nothing else, whether slim or stout,
Should ever support her, God willing !
She must—she could—she would have her whim,
Her father, she turned a deaf ear to him—
He might kill her—she didn't mind killing !
He was welcome to cut off her other limb—
He might cut her all off with a shilling !

All other promised gifts were in vain,
Golden Girdle, or Golden Chain
She writhed with impatience more than pain,
And uttered 'pshaws!' and 'pishes!'
But a Leg of Gold! as she lay in bed,
It danced before her—it ran in her head!
It jump'd with her dearest wishes!

'Gold—gold—gold! Oh, let it be gold!'
Asleep or awake that tale she told,
And when she grew delirious:
Till her parents resolved to grant her wish,
If they melted down plate, and goblet, and dish,
The case was getting so serious.

So a Leg was made in a comely mould,
Of Gold, fine virgin glittering gold,
As solid as man could make it—
Solid in foot, and calf, and shank,
A prodigious sum of money it sank;
In fact 'twas a Branch of the family Bank,
And no easy matter to break it.

All sterling metal—not half-and-half,
The Goldsmith's mark was stamped on the calf—
'Twas pure as from Mexican barter!
And to make it more costly, just over the knee—
Where another ligature used to be,
Was a circle of Jewels, worth shillings to see,
A new-fangled Badge of the Garter!

'Twas a splendid, brilliant, beautiful Leg,
Fit for the Court of Scander-Beg,
That Precious Leg of Miss Kilmansegg!
For, thanks to parental bounty,
Secure from Mortification's touch,
She stood on a Member that cost as much
As a Member for all the County!

Her Fame.

To gratify stern ambition's whims,
What hundreds and thousands of precious limbs
On a field of battle we scatter!
Sever'd by sword, or bullet, or saw,
Off they go, all bleeding and raw,—
But the public seems to get the lock-jaw,
So little is said on the matter!

Legs, the tightest that ever were seen,
The tightest, the lightest, that danc'd on the green,
Cutting capers to sweet Kitty Clover;
Shatter'd, scatter'd, cut, bowl'd down,
Off they go, worse off for renown,
A line in the *Times*, or a talk about town,
Than the leg that a fly runs over!

But the Precious Leg of Miss Kilmansegg,
That gowden, goolden, golden leg,
Was the theme of all conversation
Had it been a Pillar of Church and State,
Or a prop to support the whole Dead Weight,
It could not have furnish'd more debate
To the heads and tails of the nation!

East, and west, and north, and south,
Though useless for either hunger or drouth—
The Leg was in everybody's mouth,
To use a poetical figure,
Rumour, in taking her ravenous swim,
Saw, and seiz'd on the tempting limb,
Like a shark on the leg of a nigger.

Wilful Murder fell very dead;
Debates in the House were hardly read;
In vain the Police Reports were fed
With Irish riots and *rumpuses*—
The Leg! the Leg! was the great event,
Through every circle in life it went,
Like the leg of a pair of compasses.

The last new Novel seem'd tame and flat,
The Leg, a novelty newer than that,
Had tripp'd up the heels of Fiction !
It Burked the very essays of Burke,
And, alas ! how Wealth over Wit plays the Turk !
As a regular piece of goldsmith's work,
Got the better of Goldsmith's diction.

' A leg of gold ! what, of solid gold ! '
Cried rich and poor, and young and old,
And Master and Miss and Madam—
'Twas the talk of 'Change—the Alley—the Bank—
And with men of scientific rank,
It made as much stir as the fossil shank
Of a Lizard coeval with Adam !

Of course with Greenwich and Chelsea elves,
Men who had lost a limb themselves,
Its interest did not dwindle—
But Bill, and Ben, and Jack, and Tom
Could hardly have spun more yarns therefrom,
If the leg had been a spindle.

Meanwhile the story went to and fro,
Till, gathering like the ball of snow,
By the time it got to Stratford-le-Bow,
Through Exaggeration's touches,
The Heiress and Hope of the Kilmanseggs
Was propped on *two* fine Golden Legs,
And a pair of Golden Crutches !

Never had leg so great a run !
'Twas the 'go' and the 'Kick' thrown into one !
The mode—the new thing under the sun,
The rage—the fancy—the passion !
Bonnets were nam'd, and hats were worn,
A *la* Golden Leg instead of Leghorn,
And stockings and shoes,
Of golden hues,
Took the lead in the walks of fashion !

The Golden Leg had a vast career,
 It was sung and danced—and to show how near
 Low Folly to lofty approaches,
 Down to society's very dregs,
 The Belles of Wapping wore 'Kilmanseggs,'
 And St. Giles's Beaux sported Golden Legs
 In their pinchbeck pins and brooches!

Her First Step.

Supposing the Trunk and Limbs of Man
 Shar'd, on the allegorical plan,
 By the Passions that mark Humanity,
 Whichever might claim the head, or heart,
 The stomach, or any other part,
 The Legs would be seized by Vanity.

There's Bardus, a six-foot column of fop,
 A lighthouse without any light atop,
 Whose height would attract beholders,
 If he had not lost some inches clear
 By looking down at his kerseymere,
 Ogling the limbs he holds so dear,
 Till he got a stoop in his shoulders.

Talk of Art, of Science, or Books,
 And down go the everlasting looks,
 To his crural beauties so wedded!
 Try him, wherever you will, you find
 His mind in his legs, and his legs in his mind,
 All prongs and folly—in short a kind
 Of Fork—that is Fiddle-headed.

What wonder, then, if Miss Kilmansegg,
 With a splendid, brilliant, beautiful leg,
 Fit for the Court of Scander-Beg,
 Disdained to hide it, like Joan or Meg,
 In petticoats stuff'd or quilted?
 Not she! 'twas her convalescent whim
 To dazzle the world with the precious limb,—
 Nay, to go a little high-kilted.

So cards were sent for that sort of mob
Where Tartars and Africans hob-and-nob,
And the Cherokee talks of his cab and cob

To Polish or Lapland lovers—
Cards, like that hieroglyphical call
To a geographical Fancy Ball

On the present Post-Office covers.

For if Lion-hunters—and great ones too—
Would mob a savage from Latakoo,
Or squeeze for a glimpse of Prince Le Boo,

That unfortunate Sandwich scion—
Hundreds of first-rate people, no doubt,
Would gladly, madly, rush to a rout,
That promis'd a Golden Lion!

Her Fancy Ball.

Of all the spirits of evil fame
That hurt the soul or injure the frame,
And poison what's honest and hearty
There's none more needs a Mathew to preach
A cooling, antiphlogistic speech,

To praise and enforce

A temperate course,

Than the Evil Spirit of Party.

Go to the House of Commons or Lords,
And they seem to be busy with simple words

In their popular sense or pedantic—

But, alas! with their cheers, and sneers, and jeers,
They're really busy, whatever appears,
Putting peas in each other's ears,

To drive their enemies frantic!

Thus Tories love to worry the Whigs,
Who treat them in turn like Schwalbach pigs,
Giving them lashes, thrashes, and digs,

With their writhing and pain delighted—

But after all that's said, and more,

The malice and spite of Party are poor

To the malice and spite of a party next door,

To a party not invited.

On with the cap and out with the light,
Weariness bids the world good-night,
At least for the usual season ;
But hark ! a clatter of horses' heels ;
And Sleep and Silence are broken on wheels,
Like Wilful Murder and Treason !

Another crash—and the carriage goes—
Again poor Weariness seeks the repose
That Nature demands imperious ;
But Echo takes up the burden now,
With a rattling chorus of row-de-dow-dow,
Till Silence herself seems making a row,
Like a Quaker gone delirious !

'Tis night—a winter night—and the stars
Are shining like winkin'—Venus and Mars
Are rolling along in their golden cars
Through the sky's serene expansion—
But vainly the stars dispense their rays,
Venus and Mars are lost in the blaze
Of the Kilmanseggs' luminous mansion !

Up jumps Fear in a terrible fright !
His bedchamber windows look so bright,
With light all the Square is glutted !
Up he jumps, like a sole from the pan,
And a tremor sickens his inward man,
For he feels as only a gentleman can,
Who thinks he's being 'gutted.'

Again Fear settles, all snug and warm ;
But only to dream of a dreadful storm
From Autumn's sulphurous locker ;
But the only electric body that falls,
Wears a negative coat, and positive smalls,
And draws the peal that so appals
From the Kilmanseggs' brazen knocker !

'Tis Curiosity's Benefit Night—
And perchance 'tis the English Second-Sight ;
But whatever it be, so be it—
As the friends and guests of Miss Kilmansegg
Crowd in to look at her Golden Leg,
As many more
Mob round the door,
To see them going to see it !

In they go—in jackets and cloaks,
Plumes and bonnets, turbans and toques,
As if to a Congress of Nations :
Greeks and Malays, with daggers and dirks,
Spaniards, Jews, Chinese, and Turks,
Some like original foreign works,
But mostly like bad translations.

In they go, and to work like a pack,
Juan, Moses, and Shacabac,
Tom, and Jerry, and Springheel'd Jack,
For some of low Fancy are lovers—
Skirting, zigzagging, casting about,
Here and there, and in and out,
With a crush, and a rush, for a full-bodied rout
Is one of the stiffest of covers.

In they went, and hunted about,
Open-mouthed like chub and trout,
And some with the upper lip thrust out,
Like that fish for routing a barbel—
While Sir Jacob stood to welcome the crowd,
And rubbed his hands, and smiled aloud,
And bow'd, and bow'd, and bow'd, and bow'd,
Like a man who is sawing marble.

For Princes were there, and noble Peers ;
Dukes descended from Norman spears ;
Earls that dated from early years ;
And Lords in vast variety—
Besides the Gentry, both new and old—
For people who stand on legs of gold
Are sure to stand well with society.

'But where—where—where?' with one accord
Cried Moses and Mufti, Jack and my Lord,

Wang-fong and Il Bondocani—

When slow, and heavy, and dead as a dump,
They heard a foot begin to stump,

Thump! lump!

Lump! thump!

Like the Spectre in 'Don Giovanni!'

And lo! the Heiress, Miss Kilmansegg,
With her splendid, brilliant, beautiful leg,

In the garb of a Goddess olden—

Like chaste Diana going to hunt,

With a golden spear—which of course was blunt,

And a tunic loop'd up to a gem in front,

To show the Leg that was Golden!

Gold! still gold! her Crescent behold,
That should be silver, but would be gold;

And her robe's auriferous spangles!

Her golden stomacher—how she would melt!

Her golden quiver, and golden belt,

Where a golden bugle dangles!

And her jewelled Garter? Oh, sin! Oh, shame!

Let Pride and Vanity bear the blame,

That bring such blots on female fame!

But to be a true recorder,

Besides its thin transparent stuff,

The tunic was looped quite high enough

To give a glimpse of the Order!

But what have sin or shame to do

With a golden Leg—and a stout one too?

Away with all Prudery's panics!

That the precious metal, by thick and thin,

Will cover square acres of land or sin,

Is a fact made plain

Again and again,

In Morals as well as Mechanics.

A few, indeed, of her proper sex,
Who seemed to feel her foot on their necks,
And feared their charms would meet with checks
From so rare and splendid a blazon—
A few cried 'fie!'—and 'forward'—and 'bold!'
And said of the Leg, it might be gold,
But to them it looked like brazen!

'Twas hard, they hinted, for flesh and blood,
Virtue and Beauty, and all that's good,
To strike to mere dross their top-gallants—
But what were Beauty, or Virtue, or Worth,
Gentle manners, or gentle birth,
Nay, what the most talented head on earth
To a Leg worth fifty Talents!

But the men sang quite another hymn
Of glory and praise to the precious Limb—
Age, sordid Age, admir'd the whim,
And its indecorum pardon'd—
While half of the young—ay, more than half—
Bowed down and worshipped the Golden Calf,
Like the Jews when their hearts were harden'd.

A Golden Leg! what fancies it fir'd!
What golden wishes and hopes inspir'd!
To give but a mere abridgment—
What a leg to leg-bail Embarrassment's serf!
What a leg for a Leg to take on the turf!
What a leg for a marching regiment!

A Golden Leg!—whatever Love sings,
'Twas worth a bushel of 'Plain Gold Rings,'
With which the Romantic wheedles.
'Twas worth all the legs in stockings and socks—
'Twas a leg that might be put in the Stocks,
N.B.—Not the parish beadle's!

And Lady K. nid-nodded her head,
Lapp'd in a turban fancy-bred,
Just like a love-apple, huge and red,
Some Mussul-womanish mystery;

But whatever she meant
To represent,
She talk'd like the Muse of History.

She told how the filial leg was lost ;
And then how much the gold one cost,
With its weight to a Trojan fraction ;
And how it took off, and how it put on ;
And call'd on Devil, Duke, and Don,
Mahomet, Moses, and Prester John,
To notice its beautiful action.

And then of the Leg she went in quest ;
And led it where the light was best ;
And made it lay itself up to rest
In postures for painters' studies :
It cost more tricks and trouble by half,
Than it takes to exhibit a Six-Legged Calf
To a boothful of country Cuddies.

Nor yet did the Heiress herself omit
The arts that help to make a hit,
And preserve a prominent station.
She talk'd and laugh'd far more than her share ;
And took a part in ' Rich and Rare
Were the gems 'she wore '—and the gems were
there,

Like a Song with an Illustration.

She even stood up with a Count of France—
To dance—alas ! the measures we dance

When Vanity plays the Piper :
Vanity, Vanity, apt to betray,
And lead all sorts of legs astray,—
Wood, or metal, or human clay,—
Since Satan first played the Viper !

But first she doff'd her hunting gear,
And favour'd Tom Tug with her golden spear
To row with down the river—
A Bonze had her golden bow to hold ;
A Hermit her belt and bugle of gold ;
And an Abbot her golden quiver.

And then a space was clear'd on the floor,
And she walked the Minuet de la Cour,
With all the pomp of a Pompadour,

But although she began *andanté*,
Conceive the faces of all the Rout,
When she finished off with a whirligig bout,
And the Precious Leg stuck stiffly out
Like the leg of a *Figuranté*!

So the courtly dance was goldenly done,
And golden opinions, of course, it won

From all different sorts of people—
Chiming, ding-dong, with flattering phrase,
In one vociferous peal of praise,
Like the peal that rings on Royal days
From Loyalty's parish-steeple.

And yet, had the leg been one of those
That dance for bread in flesh-colour'd hose,

With Rosina's pastoral bevy,
The jeers it had met,—the shouts! the scoff!
The cutting advice to 'take itself off,'
For sounding but half so heavy.

Had it been a leg like those, perchance,
That teach little girls and boys to dance,
To set, poussette, recede, and advance,

With the steps and figures most proper,—
Had it hopp'd for a weekly or quarterly sum,
How little of praise or grist would have come
To a mill with such a hopper:

But the Leg was none of those limbs forlorn—
Bartering capers and hops for corn—

That meet with public hisses and scorn,
Or the morning journal denounces—
Had it pleas'd to caper from morn till dusk,
There was all the music of 'Money Musk,'
In its ponderous bangs and bounces.

But, hark ! as slow as the strokes of a pump,
 Lump, thump !
 Thump, lump !

As the Giant of Castle Otranto might stump
 To a lower room from an upper—
 Down she goes with a noisy dint,
 For taking the crimson turban's hint,
 A noble Lord at the Head of the Mint
 Is leading the Leg to supper !

But the supper, alas ! must rest untold,
 With its blaze of light, and its glitter of gold,
 For to paint that scene of glamour,
 It would need the Great Enchanter's charm,
 Who waves over Palace, and Cot, and Farm,
 An arm like the Goldbeater's Golden Arm
 That wields a Golden Hammer.

He—only *he* could fitly state
The Massive Service of Golden Plate,
 With the proper phrase and expansion—
 The rare selection of *Foreign Wines*—
 The *Alps of Ice* and *Mountains of Pines*,
 The punch in *Oceans* and sugary shrines,
 The *Temple of Taste* from *Gunter's Designs*—
 In short, all that *Wealth* with a *Feast* combines,
 In a *Splendid Family Mansion*.

Suffice it each mask'd outlandish guest,
 Ate and drank of the very best,
 According to critical conners—
 And then they pledg'd the Hostess and Host,
 But the Golden Leg was the standing toast,
 And as somebody swore,
 Walked off with more
 Than its share of the 'Hips !' and honours !

'Miss Kilmansegg !—
 Full glasses I beg !—
 Miss Kilmansegg and her Precious Leg !'
 And away went the bottle careering !

Wine in bumpers ! and shouts in peals !
Till the Clown didn't know his head from his heels,
The Mussulman's eyes danced two-some reels,
And the Quaker was hoarse with cheering !

Her Dream.

Miss Kilmansegg took off her leg,
And laid it down like a cribbage peg,
For the Rout was done and the riot :
The Square was hush'd ; not a sound was heard
The sky was grey, and no creature stirr'd,
Except one little precocious bird,
That chirp'd—and then was quiet.

So still without,—so still within ;—

It had been a sin

To drop a pin—

So intense is silence after a din,

It seemed like Death's rehearsal !

To stir the air no eddy came ;

And the taper burnt with as still a flame,

As to flicker had been a burning shame,

In a calm so universal.

The time for sleep had come at last ;

And there was the Bed, so soft, so vast,

Quite a field of Bedfordshire clover ;

Softer, cooler, and calmer, no doubt,

From the piece of work just ravell'd out,

For one of the pleasures of having a rout,

Is the pleasure of having it over.

No sordid pallet, or truckle mean,

Of straw, and rug, and tatters unclean ;

But a splendid, gilded, carved machine,

That was fit for a Royal Chamber,

On the top was a gorgeous golden wreath ;

And the damask curtains hung beneath,

Like clouds of crimson and amber.

Curtains, held up by two little plump things,
With golden bodies and golden wings—
Mere fins for such solidities—
Two Cupids, in short,
Of the regular sort,
But the housemaid called them 'Cupidities.'

No patchwork quilt, all seams and scars,
But velvet, powder'd with golden stars,
A fit mantle for *Night-Commanders* !
And the pillow, as white as snow undimm'd,
And as cool as the pool that the breeze has skimm'd,
Was cased in the finest cambric, and trimm'd
With the costliest lace of Flanders.

And the bed—of the Eider's softest down,
'Twas a place to revel, to smother, to drown
In a bliss inferr'd by the Poet :
For if Ignorance be indeed a bliss,
What blessed ignorance equals this,
To sleep—and not to know it ?

Oh, bed ! oh, bed ! delicious bed !
That heav'n upon earth to the weary head ;
But a place that to name would be ill-bred,
To the head with a wakeful trouble—
'Tis held by such a different lease !
To one, a place of comfort and peace,
All stuff'd with the down of stubble geese,
To another, with only the stubble.

To one, a perfect Halcyon nest.
All calm, and balm, and quiet, and rest,
And soft as the fur of the cony—
To another, so restless for body and head,
That the bed seems borrow'd from Nettlebed,
And the pillow from Stratford the Stony !

To the happy, a first-class carriage of ease,
To the land of Nod, or where you please ;
But alas ! for the watchers and weepers,

Who turn, and turn, and turn again,
But turn, and turn, and turn in vain,

With an anxious brain,

And thoughts in a train

That does not run upon *sleepers* !

Wide awake as the mousing owl,
Night-hawk, or other nocturnal fowl,—

But more profitless vigils keeping,—

Wide awake in the dark they stare,

Filling with phantoms the vacant air,

As if that Crook-Back'd Tyrant Care

Had plotted to kill them sleeping.

And oh ! when the blessed diurnal light

Is quench'd by the providential night,

To render our slumber more certain,

Pity, pity the wretches that weep,

For they must be wretched who cannot sleep

When nature herself draws the curtain !

The careful Betty the pillow beats,

And airs the blankets, and smooths the sheets,

And gives the mattress a shaking—

But vainly Betty performs her part,

If a ruffled head and a rumpled heart,

As well as the couch want making.

There's Morbid, all bile, and verjuice, and nerves,

Where other people would make preserves,

He turns his fruits into pickles :

Jealous, envious, and fretful by day,

At night, to his own sharp fancies a prey,

He lies like a hedgehog rolled up the wrong way,

Tormenting himself with his prickles.

But a child !—that bids the world good-night,

In downright earnest and cuts it quite—

A Cherub no Art can copy,—

'Tis a perfect picture to see him lie

As if he had supp'd on dormouse pie

(An ancient classical dish by the by),

With a sauce of syrup of poppy.

Oh, bed ! bed ! bed ! delicious bed !
That heav'n upon earth to the weary head,
Whether lofty or low its condition !
But instead of putting our plagues on shelves,
In our blankets how often we toss ourselves,
Or are tossed by such allegorical elves
As Pride, Hate, Greed, and Ambition !

The independent Miss Kilmansegg
Took off her independent Leg
And laid it beneath her pillow,
And then on the bed her frame she cast,
The time for repose had come at last,
But long, long after the storm is past
Rolls the turbid, turbulent billow.

No part she had in vulgar cares
That belong to common household affairs—
Nocturnal annoyances such as theirs
Who lie with a shrewd surmising
That while they are couchant (a bitter cup !)
Their bread and butter are getting up,
And the coals—confound them !—are rising.

No fear she had her sleep to postpone,
Like the crippled Widow who weeps alone,
And cannot make a doze her own,
For the dread that may hap on the morrow,
The true and Christian reading to baulk,
A broker will take up her bed and walk,
By way of curing her sorrow.

No cause like these she had to bewail :
But the breath of applause had blown a gale,
And winds from that quarter seldom fail
To cause some human commotion ;
But whenever such breezes coincide
With the very spring-tide
Of human pride,
There's no such swell on the ocean !

Peace, and ease, and slumber lost,
She turn'd and roll'd, and tumbled, and toss'd,
With a tumult that would not settle :
A common case, indeed, with such
As have too little, or think too much,
Of the precious and glittering metal.

Gold !—she saw at her golden foot
The Peer whose tree had an olden root,
The Proud, the Great, the Learned to boot,
The handsome, the gay, and the witty—
The man of Science—of Arms—of Art,
The man who deals but at Pleasure's mart
And the man who deals in the City.

Gold, still gold—and true to the mould !
In the very scheme of her dream it told ;
For, by magical transmutation,
From her Leg through her body it seem'd to go,
Till, gold above, and gold below,
She was gold, all gold, from her little gold toe
To her organ of Veneration !

And still she retain'd, through Fancy's art,
The Golden Bow, and the Golden Dart,
With which she had play'd a Goddess's part
In her recent glorification.
And still, like one of the selfsame brood,
On a Plinth of the selfsame metal she stood
For the whole world's adoration.

And hymns and incense around her roll'd,
From Golden Harps and Censers of Gold,—
For Fancy in dreams is as uncontroll'd
As a horse without a bridle :
What wonder, then, from all checks exempt,
If, inspired by the Golden Leg, she dreamt
She was turn'd to a Golden Idol ?

Her Courtship.

When leaving Eden's happy land
The grieving Angel led by the hand
Our banish'd Father and Mother,
Forgotten amid their awful doom,
The tears, the fears, and the future's gloom,
On each brow was a wreath of Paradise bloom,
That our Parents had twined for each other.

It was only while sitting like Figures of stone,
For the grieving Angel had skyward flown,
As they sat, those Two, in the world alone,
With disconsolate hearts nigh cloven.
That, scenting the gust of happier hours,
They look'd around for the precious flowers,
And lo!—a last relic of Eden's dear bowers—
The chaplet that love had woven!

And still, when a pair of Lovers meet,
There's a sweetness in air, unearthly sweet,
That savours still of that happy retreat
Where Eve by Adam was courted:
Whilst the joyous Thrush, and the gentle Dove,
Woo'd their mates in the boughs above,
And the Serpent, as yet, only sported.

Who hath not felt that breath in the air,
A perfume and freshness strange and rare,
A warmth in the light, and a bliss everywhere,
When young hearts yearn together?
All sweets below, and all sunny above,
Oh! there's nothing in life like making love,
Save making hay in fine weather!

Who hath not found amongst his flow'rs,
A blossom too bright for this world of ours,
Like a rose among snows of Sweden?
But to turn again to Miss Kilmansegg,
Where must Love have gone to beg,
If such a thing as a Golden Leg
Had put its foot in Eden?

And yet—to tell the rigid truth—
Her favour was sought by Age and Youth—
For the prey will find a prowler!
She was follow'd, flatter'd, courted, address'd,
Woo'd, and coo'd, and wheedled, and press'd,
By suitors from North, South, East, and West,
Like that Heiress, in song, Tibbie Fowler!

But, alas! alas! for the Woman's fate,
Who has from a mob to choose a mate
'Tis a strange and painful mystery!
But the more the eggs, the worse the hatch;
The more the fish, the worse the catch;
The more the sparks, the worse the match;
Is a fact in Woman's history.

Give her between a brace to pick,
And, mayhap, with luck to help the trick,
She will take the Faustus, and leave the Old Nick—
But her future bliss to baffle,
Amongst a score let her have a voice,
And she'll have as little cause to rejoice,
As if she had won the 'Man of her choice'
In a matrimonial raffle!

Thus, even thus, with the Heiress and Hope,
Fulfilling the adage of too much rope,
With so ample a competition,
She chose the least worthy of all the group,
Just as the vulture makes a stoop,
And singles out from the herd or troop,
The beast of the worst condition.

A Foreign Count,—who came incog.,
Not under a cloud, but under a fog,
In a Calais packet's fore-cabin,
To charm some lady, British-born,
With his eyes as black as the fruit of the thorn,
And his hooky nose, and his beard half-shorn,
Like a half-converted Rabbin.

And because the Sex confess a charm,
In the man who has slash'd a head or arm,
Or has been a throat's undoing,
He was dress'd like one of the glorious trade,
At least when Glory is off the parade,
With a stock, and a frock, well trimm'd with braid,
And frogs—that went a-wooing.

Moreover, as Counts are apt to do,
On the left-hand side of his dark surtout,
At one of those holes that buttons go through
(To be a precise recorder),
A ribbon he wore, or rather a scrap,
About an inch of ribbon mayhap,
That one of his rivals, a whimsical chap,
Described as his 'Retail Order.'

And then—and much it helped his chance—
He could sing, and play first fiddle, and dance,
Perform charades, and Proverbs of France—
Act the tender, and do the cruel;
For amongst his other killing parts,
He had broken a brace of female hearts,
And murder'd three men in duel!

Savage at heart, and false of tongue,
Subtle with age, and smooth to the young,
Like a snake in his coiling and curling—
Such was the Count—to give him a niche—
Who came to court that Heiress rich,
And knelt at her foot—one needn't say which—
Besieging her Castle of *Sterling*.

With pray'rs and vows he open'd his trench,
And plied her with English, Spanish, and French,
In phrases the most sentimental.
And quoted poems in High and Low Dutch,
With now and then an Italian touch,
Till she yielded, without resisting much,
To homage so continental.

And then the sordid bargain to close,
With a miniature sketch of his hooky nose,
And his dear black eyes, as black as sloes,
And his beard and whiskers as black as those,
The lady's consent he requited—
And instead of the lock that lovers beg,
The Count received from Miss Kilmansegg
A model in small, of her Precious Leg—
And so the couple were plighted !

But, oh ! the love that gold must crown !
Better—better, the love of the clown,
Who admires his lass in her Sunday gown,
As if all the fairies had dress'd her !
Whose brain to no crooked thought gives birth,
Except that he never will part on earth,
With his true love's crooked tester !

Alas, for the love that's link'd with gold !
Better—better a thousand times told—
Most honest, happy, and laudable,
The downright loving of pretty Cis,
Who wipes her lips, though there's nothing amiss,
And takes a kiss, and gives a kiss,
In which her heart is audible !

Pretty Cis, so smiling and bright,
Who loves as she labours, with all her might,
And without any sordid leaven !
Who blushes as red as haws and hips,
Down to her very finger-tips,
For Roger's blue ribbons—to her, like strips
Cut out of the azure of Heaven !

Her Marriage.

'Twas morn—a most auspicious one !
From the Golden East, the Golden Sun
Came forth his glorious race to run,
Through clouds of most splendid tinges ;

Clouds that lately slept in shade,
But now seemed made
Of gold brocade,
With magnificent golden fringes.

Gold above, and gold below,
The earth reflected the golden glow,
From river, and hill, and valley;
Gilt by the golden light of morn,
The Thames—it looked like the Golden Horn,
And the Barge, that carried coal or corn,
Like Cleopatra's Galley!

Bright as clusters of Golden rod,
Suburban poplars began to nod,
With extempore splendour furnished;
While London was bright with glittering clocks,
Golden dragons, and Golden cocks,
And above them all,
The dome of St. Paul,
With its Golden Cross and its Golden Ball,
Shone out as if newly burnish'd!

And lo! for Golden Hours and Joys,
Troops of glittering Golden Boys
Danced along with a jocund noise,
And their gilded emblems carried!
In short, 'twas the year's most Golden Day,
By mortals called the First of May,
When Miss Kilmansegg
Of the Golden Leg
With a Golden Ring was married!

And thousands of children, women, and men,
Counted the clock from eight till ten,
From St. James's sonorous steeple;
For next to that interesting job,
The hanging of Jack, or Bill, or Bob,
There's nothing so draws a London mob
As the noosing of very rich people.

And a treat it was for a mob to behold
The bridal carriage that blazed with gold !
And the Footmen tall, and the Coachman bold,

In liveries so resplendent—
Coats you wonder'd to see in place,
They seemed so rich with golden lace,
That they might have been independent.

Coats that made these menials proud,
Gaze with scorn on the dingy crowd,
From their gilded elevations ;
Not to forget that saucy lad
(Ostentation's favourite cad),
The page, who looked so splendidly clad,
Like a page of the 'Wealth of Nations.'

But the coachman carried off the state,
With what was a Lancashire body of late,
Turned into a Dresden Figure ;
With a bridal Nosegay of early bloom,
About the size of a birchen broom,
And so huge a White Favour, had Gog been Groom,
He need not have worn a bigger.

And then to see the Groom ! the Count !
With Foreign Orders to such an amount,
And whiskers so wild—nay, bestial ;
He seem'd to have borrow'd the shaggy hair,
As well as the Stars of the Polar Bear,
To make him look celestial !

And then—Great Jove ! the struggle, the crush,
The screams, the heaving, the awful rush,
The swearing, the tearing, and fighting,
The hats and bonnets smash'd like an egg—
To catch a glimpse of the Golden Leg,
Which, between the steps and Miss Kilmansegg,
Was fully display'd in alighting !

From the Golden Ankle up to the Knee,
There it was for the mob to see !
A shocking act had it chanced to be
A crooked leg or a skinny :

But although a magnificent veil she wore,
Such as never was seen before,

In case of blushes, she blushed no more

Than George the First on a guinea !

Another step, and lo ! she was launch'd !

All in white, as Brides are *blanch'd*,

With a wreath of most wonderful splendour—

Diamonds, and pearls, so rich in device,

That, according to calculation nice,

Her head was worth as royal a price

As the head of the Young Pretender.

Bravely she shone—and shone the more,

As she sailed through the crowd of squalid and poor,

Thief, beggar, and tatterdemalion—

Led by the Count, with his sloe-black eyes,

Bright with triumph, and some surprise,

Like Anson, on making sure of his Prize,

The famous Mexican Galleon !

Anon, came Lady K., with her face

Quite made up to act with grace,

But she cut the performance shorter ;

For instead of pacing stately and stiff,

At the stare of the vulgar she took a miff,

And ran, full speed, into Church, as if

To get married before her daughter.

But Sir Jacob walk'd more slowly, and bow'd

Right and left to the gaping crowd,

Wherever a glance was seizable :

For Sir Jacob thought he bow'd like a Guelph,

And therefore bow'd to imp and elf,

And would gladly have made a bow to himself,

Had such a bow been feasible.

And last—and not the least of the sight,

Six ' Handsome Fortunes,' all in white,

Came to help in the marriage rite,—

And rehearse their own hymeneals—

And then the bright processsion to close

They were followed by just as many Beaux,

Quite fine enough for Ideals.

Glittering men, and splendid dames,
Thus they enter'd the porch of St. James,
Pursued by a thunder of laughter ;
For the Beadle was forced to intervene,
For Jim the Crow, and his Mayday Queen,
With her gilded ladle, and Jack i' the Green,
Would fain have follow'd after !

Beadle-like he hushed the shout ;
But the temple was full 'inside and out,'
And a buzz kept buzzing all round about
Like bees when the day is sunny—
A buzz universal that interfered
With the rite that ought to have been revered,
As if the couple already were smeared
With Wedlock's treacle and honey !

Yet Wedlock's a very awful thing !
'Tis something like that feat in the ring,
Which requires good nerve to do it—
When one of a 'Grand Equestrian Troop'
Makes a jump at a gilded hoop,
Not certain at all
Of what may befall
After his getting through it !

But the Count he felt the nervous work
No more than any polygamous Turk,
Or bold piratical skipper,
Who, during his buccaneering search,
Would as soon engage 'a hand' in church
As a hand on board his clipper !

And how did the Bride perform her part ?
Like any Bride who is cold at heart,
Mere snow with the ice's glitter ;
What but a life of winter for her !
Bright but chilly, alive without stir,
So splendidly comfortless,—just like a Fir
When the frost is severe and bitter.

Such were the future man and wife !
Whose bale or bliss to the end of life
A few short words were to settle—
Will you have this woman ?

I will—and then,
Will you have this man ?

I will, and Amen—
And those Two were one Flesh, in the Angels' ken.
Except one Leg—that was metal.

Then the names were sign'd—and kiss'd the kiss :
And the Bride, who came from her coach a Miss,
As a Countess walked to her carriage—
Whilst Hymen preen'd his plumes like a dove,
And Cupid flutter'd his wings above
In the shape of a fly,—as little a Love
As ever look'd in at a marriage !

Another crash—and away they dash'd,
And the gilded carriage and footmen flash'd
From the eyes of the gaping people—
Who turn'd to gaze at the toe-and-heel
Of the Golden Boys beginning a reel
To the merry sound of a wedding-peal
From St. James's musical steeple.

Those wedding bells ! those wedding bells !
How sweetly they sound in pastoral dells
From a tow'r in an ivy-green jacket !
But town-made joys how dearly they cost ;
And after all are tumbled and tost,
Like a peal from a London steeple, and lost
In town-made riot and racket.

The wedding-peal, how sweetly it peals
With grass or heather beneath our heels,—
For bells are Music's laughter !—
But a London peal, well mingled, be sure,
With vulgar noises and voices impure,
What a harsh and discordant overture
To the Harmony meant to come after !

But hence with Discord—perchance, too soon
To cloud the face of the honeymoon

With a dismal occultation!—

Whatever Fate's concerted trick,
The Countess and Count, at the present nick
Have a chicken and not a crow to pick

At a sumptuous Cold Collation.

A Breakfast—no unsubstantial mess,
But one in the style of Good Queen Bess,

Who,—hearty as hippocampus,—
Broke her fast with ale and beef,
Instead of toast and the Chinese leaf,

And in lieu of anchovy—grampus!

A breakfast of fowl, and fish, and flesh;
Whatever was sweet, or salt, or fresh;

With wines the most rare and curious—
Wines of the richest flavour and hue;
With fruits from the worlds, both Old and New;
And fruits obtained before they were due

At a discount most usurious.

For wealthy palates there be, that scout
What is *in* season, for what is *out*,

And prefer all precocious savour:

For instance, early green peas, of the sort
That costs some four or five guineas a quart;

Where the *Mint* is the principal flavour.

And many a wealthy man was there,
Such as the wealthy City could spare,

To put in a portly appearance—

Men, whom their fathers had help'd to gild;
And men who had their fortunes to build,
And—much to their credit—had richly fill'd

Their purses by *pursy-verance*.

Men, by popular rumour at least,
Not the last to enjoy a feast!

And truly they were not idle!

Luckier far than the chestnut tits,
Which, down at the door, stood champing their bits,
At a different sort of *bridal*.

For the time was come—and the whisker'd Count
Help'd his Bride in the carriage to mount,

And fain would the Muse deny it,
But the crowd, including two Butchers in blue
(The regular killing Whitechapel hue),
Of her Precious Calf had as ample a view,
As if they had come to buy it!

Then away! away! with all the speed
That golden spurs can give to the steed,—
Both Yellow Boys and Guineas, indeed,
Concurred to urge the cattle—
Away they went, with favours white,
Yellow jackets, and panels bright,
And left the mob, like a mob at night,
Agape at the sound of a rattle.

Away! away! they rattled and roll'd,
The Count, and his Bride, and her Leg of Gold—

That fated charm to the charmer!
Away,—through Old Brentford rang the din,
Of wheels and heels, on their way to win
That hill, named after one of her kin,
The hill of the Golden Farmer!

Gold, still gold—it flew like dust!
It tipp'd the post-boy, and paid the trust;
In each open palm it was freely thrust:

There was nothing but giving and taking!
And if gold could ensure the future hour,
What hopes attended that Bride to her bow'r,
But alas! even hearts with a four-horse pow'r
Of opulence end in breaking!

Her Honeymoon.

The moon—the moon, so silver and cold,
Her fickle temper has oft been told,

Now shady—now bright and sunny—
But of all the lunar things that change,
The one that shows most fickle and strange,
And takes the most eccentric range,
Is the moon—so called—of honey!

To some a full-grown orb reveal'd,
As big and as round as Norval's shield,
And as bright as a burner Budelighted;
To others as dull, and dingy, and damp
As any oleaginous lamp,
Of the regular old parochial stamp,
In a London fog benighted.

To the loving, a bright and constant sphere,
That makes earth's commonest scenes appear
All poetic, romantic, and tender:
Hanging with jewels a cabbage stump,
And investing a common post or a pump,
A currant-bush, or a gooseberry clump,
With a halo of dreamlike splendour.

A sphere such as shone from Italian skies,
In Juliet's dear, dark, liquid eyes,
Tipping trees with its argent braveries—
And to couples not favour'd with Fortune's boons,
One of the most delightful of moons,
For it brightens their pewter platters and spoons
Like a silver service of Savory's!

For all is bright, and beauteous, and clear,
And the meanest thing most precious and dear,
When the magic of love is present:
Love, that lends a sweetness and grace
To the humblest spot and the plainest face—
That turns Wilderness Row into Paradise Place,
And Garlick Hill to Mount Pleasant!

Love that sweetens sugarless tea,
And makes contentment and joy agree
With the coarsest boarding and bedding:
Love that no golden ties can attach,
But nestles under the humblest thatch,
And will fly away from an Emperor's match
To dance at a Penny Wedding!

Oh, happy, happy, thrice happy state,
When such a bright Planet governs the fate
Of a pair of united lovers !

'Tis theirs, in spite of the Serpent's hiss,
To enjoy the pure primeval kiss,
With as much of the old original bliss
As mortality ever recovers !

There's strength in double joints, no doubt,
In double X Ale, and Dublin Stout,
That the single sorts know nothing about—
And a fist is strongest when doubled—
And double aqua-fortis, of course,
And double soda-water, perforce,
Are the strongest that ever bubbled !

There's double beauty whenever a Swan
Swims on a lake, with her double thereon ;
And ask the gardener, Luke or John,
Of the beauty of double-blowing—
A double dahlia delights the eye :
And it's far the loveliest sight in the sky
When a double rainbow is glowing !

There's warmth in a pair of double soles ;
As well as a double allowance of coals—
In a coat that is double-breasted—
In double windows and double doors ;
And a double U wind is blest by scores
For its warmth to the tender-chested.

There's a twofold sweetness in double pipes ;
And a double-barrel and double snipes
Give the sportsman a duplicate pleasure :
There's double safety in double locks ;
And double letters bring cash for the box ;
And all the world knows that double knocks
Are gentility's double measure.

There's a double sweetness in double rhymes,
And a double at Whist, and a double Times
In profit are certainly double—

By doubling, the Hare contrives to escape :
And all seamen delight in a doubled Cape,
And a double-reefed topsail in trouble.

There's a double chuck at a double chin,
And of course there's a double pleasure therein,
If the parties were brought to telling :
And however our Dennises take offence,
A double meaning shows double sense ;
And if proverbs tell truth,
A double tooth
Is Wisdom's adopted dwelling !

But double wisdom, and pleasure, and sense,
Beauty, respect, strength, comfort, and thence
Through whatever the list discovers,
They are all in the double blessedness summ'd,
Of what was formerly double-drumm'd,
The Marriage of two true Lovers !

Now the Kilmansegg Moon—it must be told—
Though instead of silver it tipp'd with gold—
Shone rather wan, and distant, and cold ;
And before its days were at thirty,
Such gloomy clouds began to collect,
With an ominous ring of ill effect,
As gave but too much cause to expect
Such weather as seamen call dirty !

And yet the moon was the ' Young May Moon,'
And the scented hawthorn had blossom'd soon,
And the thrush and the blackbird were singing—
The snow-white lambs were skipping in play,
And the bee was humming a tune all day
To flowers as welcome as flowers in May,
And the Trout in the stream was springing !

But what were the hues of the blooming earth,
Its scents—its sounds—or the music and mirth
Of its furr'd or its feather'd creatures,

To a Pair in the world's last sordid stage,
Who had never look'd into Nature's page,
And had strange ideas of a Golden Age,
Without any Arcadian features ?

And what were joys of the pastoral kind
To a Bride—town-made—with a heart and a mind
With simplicity ever at battle ?
A bride of an ostentatious race,
Who, thrown in the Golden Farmer's place,
Would have trimm'd her shepherds with golden
lace,
And gilt the horns of her cattle.

She could not please the pigs with her whim,
And the sheep wouldn't cast their eyes at a limb
For which she had been such a martyr ;
The deer in the park, and the colts at grass,
And the cows unheeded let it pass ;
And the ass on the common was such an ass,
That he wouldn't have swapp'd
The thistle he cropp'd
For her Leg, including the Garter !

She hated lanes, and she hated fields—
She hated all that the country yields !
And barely knew turnips from clover ;
She hated walking in any shape,
And a country stile was an awkward scrape,
Without the bribe of a mob to gape
At the Leg in clambering over !

O blessed nature, ' O rus ! O rus ! '
Who cannot sigh for the country thus,
Absorbed in a worldly torpor—
Who does not yearn for its meadow-sweet breath,
Untainted by care, and crime, and death,
And to stand sometimes upon grass or heath—
That soul, spite of gold, is a pauper !

But to hail the pearly advent of morn,
And relish the odour fresh from the thorn,
She was far too pamper'd a madam—
Or to joy in the daylight waxing strong,
While, after ages of sorrow and wrong,
The scorn of the proud, the misrule of the strong,
And all the woes that to man belong,
The Lark still carols the self-same song
That he did to the uncurst Adam!

The Lark!—she had given all Leipzig's flocks
For a Vauxhall tune in a musical box;

And as for the birds in the thicket,
Thrush or ouzel in leafy niche,
The linnet or finch—she was far too rich
To care for a Morning concert, to which
She was welcome without any ticket.

Gold, still gold, her standard of old,
All pastoral joys were tried by gold,
Or by fancies golden and crural—
Till ere she had pass'd one week unblest,
As her agricultural Uncle's guest,
Her mind was made up and fully imprest
That felicity could not be rural!

And the Count?—to the snow-white lambs at play,
And all the scents and the sights of May,

And the birds that warbled their passion,
His ears, and dark eyes, and decided nose,
Were as deaf and as blind and as dull as those
That overlook the Bouquet de Rose,

The Huile Antique,

And Parfum Unique,

In a Barber's Temple of Fashion.

To tell, indeed, the true extent
Of his rural bias, so far it went

As to covet estates in ring fences—
And for rural lore he had learn'd in town,
That the country was green, turn'd up with brown,
And garnish'd with trees that a man might cut down
Instead of his own expenses.

And yet had that fault been his only one,
The Pair might have had few quarrels or none,
For their tastes thus far were in common ;
But faults he had, that a haughty bride
With a Golden Leg could hardly abide—
Faults that would even have roused the pride
Of a far less metalsome woman !

It was early days indeed for a wife,
In the very spring of her married life,
To be chill'd by its wintry weather—
But instead of sitting as Love-Birds do,
Or Hymen's turtles that bill and coo,
Enjoying their 'moon and honey for two,'
They were scarcely seen together !

In vain she sat with her Precious Leg,
A little exposed, *à la* Kilmansegg,
And rolled her eyes in their sockets ;
He left her in spite of her tender regards,
And those loving murmurs describ'd by bards,
For the rattling of dice and the shuffling of cards,
And the poking of balls into pockets !

Moreover he lov'd the deepest stake
And the heaviest bet that players would make ;
And he drank—the reverse of sparely,—
And he used strange curses that made her fret ;
And when he played with herself at piquet,
She found, to her cost,
For she always lost,
That the Count did not count quite fairly.

And then came dark mistrust and doubt,
Gathered by worming his secrets out,
And slips in his conversations—
Fears, which all her peace destroy'd,
That his title was null,—his coffers were void—
And his French Château was in Spain, or enjoy'd
The most airy of situations.

But still his heart—if he had such a part—
She—only she—might possess his heart,

And hold his affections in fetters—
Alas ! that Hope, like a crazy ship,
Was forced its anchor and cable to slip
When, seduced by her fears, she took a dip
In his private papers and letters.

Letters that told of dangerous leagues ;
And notes that hinted as many intrigues

As the Count's in the ' Barber of Seville '—
In short such mysteries came to light,
That the Countess-Bride, on the thirtieth night,
Woke and started up in affright,
And kick'd and scream'd with all her might,
And finally fainted away outright,

For she dreamt she had married the Devil !

Her Misery.

Who hath not met with home-made bread,
A heavy compound of putty and lead—
And home-made wines that rack the head,
And home-made liqueurs and waters ?
Home-made pop that will not foam,
And home-made dishes that drive one from home,
Not to name each mess,
For the face or dress,
Home-made by the homely daughters ?

Home-made physic, that sickens the sick ;
Thick for thin and thin for thick ;—
In short each homogeneous trick
For poisoning domesticity ?
And since our Parents, called the First,
A little family squabble nurst,
Of all our evils the worst of the worst
Is home-made infelicity.

There's a Golden Bird that claps its wings,
And dances for joy on its perch, and sings
With a Persian exaltation :
For the Sun is shining into the room,
And brightens up the carpet-bloom,
As if it were new, bran new from the loom,
Or the lone Nun's fabrication.

And thence the glorious radiance flames
On pictures in massy gilded frames—
Enshrining, however, no painted Dames,
But portraits of colts and fillies—
Pictures hanging on walls which shine,
In spite of the bard's familiar line,
With clusters of 'gilded lilies.'

And still the flooding sunlight shares
Its lustre with gilded sofas and chairs,
That shine as if freshly burnish'd—
And gilded tables, with glittering stocks
Of gilded china, and golden clocks,
Toy, and trinket, and musical box,
That Peace and Paris have furnished.

And lo ! with the brightest gleam of all
The glowing sunbeam is seen to fall
On an object as rare as splendid—
The golden foot of the Golden Leg
Of the Countess—once Miss Kilmansegg—
But there all sunshine is ended.

Her cheek is pale, and her eye is dim,
And downward cast, yet not at the limb,
Once the centre of all speculation ;
But downward drooping in comfort's dearth,
As gloomy thoughts are drawn to the earth—
Whence human sorrows derive their birth—
By a moral gravitation.

Her golden hair is out of its braids,
And her sighs betray the gloomy shades
That her evil planet revolves in—
And tears are falling that catch a gleam
So bright as they drop in the sunny beam,
That tears of *aqua regia* they seem,
The water that Gold dissolves in!

Yet, not in filial grief were shed
Those tears for a mother's insanity;
Nor yet because her father was dead,
For the bowing Sir Jacob had bow'd his head
To Death—with his usual urbanity;
The waters that down her visage rill'd
Were drops of unrectified spirit distill'd
From the limbeck of Pride and Vanity.

Tears that fell alone and unchecked,
Without relief, and without respect,
Like the fabled pearls that the pigs neglect,
When pigs have that opportunity—
And of all the griefs that mortals share,
The one that seems the hardest to bear
Is the grief without community.

How blessed the heart that has a friend
A sympathizing ear to lend
To troubles too great to smother!
For as ale and porter, when flat, are restored,
Till a sparkling, bubbling head they afford,
So sorrow is cheer'd by being pour'd
From one vessel into another.

But friend or gossip she had not one
To hear the vile deeds that the Count had done,
How night after night he rambled;
And how she learn'd by sad degrees,
That he drank, and smok'd, and worse than these.
That he 'swindled, intrigued, and gambled.'

How he kiss'd the maids, and sparr'd with John ;
And came to bed with his garments on ;

With other offences as heinous—
And brought *strange* gentlemen home to dine,
That he said were in the Fancy Line,
And they fancied spirits instead of wine,
And called her lap-dog 'Wenus.'

Of 'making a book,' how he made a stir,
But never had written a line to her,

Once his idol and Cara Sposa :
And how he had storm'd, and treated her ill,
Because she refus'd to go down to a mill,
She didn't know where, but remember'd still
That the Miller's name was Mendoza.

How often he wak'd her up at night,
And oftener still by the morning light,
Reeling home from his haunts unlawful ;
Singing songs that shouldn't be sung,
Except by beggars and thieves unhung—
Or volleying oaths, that a foreign tongue
Made still more horrid and awful !

How oft, instead of otto of rose,
With vulgar smells he offended her nose,
From gin, tobacco, and onion !
And then how wildly he used to stare !
And shake his fist at nothing, and swear,—
And pluck by the handful his shaggy hair,
Till he looked like a study of Giant Despair
For a new Edition of Bunyan !

For dice will run the contrary way,
As well is known to all who play,
And cards will conspire as in treason :
And what with keeping a hunting-box,
Following fox—
Friends in flocks,
Burgundies, Hocks,
From London Docks ;

Stultz's frocks,
Manton and Nock's
Barrels and locks,
Shooting blue rocks :
Trainers and jocks,
Buskins and socks,
Pugilistical knocks,
And fighting-cocks,
If he found himself short in funds and stocks,
These rhymes will furnish the reason !

His friends, indeed, were falling away—
Friends who insist on play or pay—
And he fear'd at no very distant day
To be cut by Lord and by cadger,
As one who was gone or going to smash,
For his cheques no longer drew the cash,
Because, as his comrades explain'd in flash,
'He had overdrawn his badger.'

Gold, gold—alas ! for the gold
Spent where souls are bought and sold,
In Vice's Walpurgis revel !
Alas ! for muffles, and bulldogs, and guns,
The leg that walks, and the leg that runs,
All real evils, though Fancy ones,
When they lead to debt, dishonour, and duns,
Nay, to death, and perchance, the Devil !

Alas ! for the last of a Golden race !
Had she cried her wrongs in the market-place,
She had warrant for all her clamour—
For the worst of rogues, and brutes, and rakes,
Was breaking her heart by constant aches,
With as little remorse as the pauper who breaks
A flint with a parish hammer !

Her Last Will.

Now the Precious Leg, while cash was flush,
Or the Count's acceptance worth a rush,
Had never excited dissension ;

But no sooner the stocks began to fall,
Than, without any ossification at all,
The limb became what people call
A perfect bone of contention.

For alter'd days brought alter'd ways,
And instead of the complimentary phrase,
So current before her bridal—
The Countess heard, in language low,
That her Precious Leg was precious slow,
A good 'un to look at but bad to go,
And kept quite a sum lying idle.

That instead of playing musical airs,
Like Colin's foot in going up-stairs—
As the wife in the Scottish ballad declares—
It made an infernal stumping.
Whereas a member of cork or wood,
Would be lighter and cheaper, and quite as good,
Without the unbearable thumping.

P'rhaps she thought it a decent thing,
To show her calf to cobbler and king,
But nothing could be absurder—
While none but the crazy would advertise
Their gold before their servants' eyes,
Who of course some night would make it a prize,
By a Shocking and Barbarous Murder.

But spite of hint, and threat, and scoff,
The Leg kept its situation:
For legs are not to be taken off
By a verbal amputation.

And mortals when they take a whim,
The greater the folly the stiffer the limb
That stands upon it or by it—
So the Countess, then Miss Kilmansegg,
At her marriage refused to stir a peg,
Till the Lawyers had fastened on her Leg,
As fast as the Law could tie it.

Firmly then—and more firmly yet—
With scorn for scorn, and with threat for threat,
The Proud One confronted the Cruel:
And loud and bitter the quarrel arose,
Fierce and merciless—one of those,
With spoken daggers, and looks like blows,
In all but the bloodshed a duel!

Rash, and wild, and wretched, and wrong,
Were the words that came from Weak and Strong,
Till madden'd for desperate matters
Fierce as tigress escap'd from her den,
She flew to her desk—'twas opened—and then,
In the time it takes to try a pen,
Or the clerk to utter his slow Amen,
Her Will was in fifty tatters!

But the Count, instead of curses wild,
Only nodded his head and smil'd,
As if at the spleen of an angry child;
But the calm was deceitful and sinister!
A lull like those of the treacherous sea—
For Hate in that moment had sworn to be
The Golden Leg's sole Legatee,
And that very night to administer!

Her Death.

'Tis a stern and startling thing to think
How often mortality stands on the brink
Of its grave without any misgiving:
And yet in this slippery world of strife,
In the stir of human bustle so rife,
There are daily sounds to tell us that Life
Is dying, and Death is living!

Ay, Beauty the Girl, and Love the Boy,
Bright as they are with hope and joy.

How their souls would sadden instanter,
To remember that one of those wedding-bells,
That ring so merrily through the dells,
Is the same that knells
Our last farewells,

Only broken into a canter !

But breath and blood set doom at nought—
How little the wretched Countess thought,
When at night she unloos'd her sandal,
That the Fates had woven her burial-cloth,
And that Death, in the shape of a Death's Head
Moth,

Was fluttering round her candle !

As she look'd at her clock of or-molu,
For the hours she had gone so wearily through
At the end of a day of trial—

How little she saw in her pride of prime
The Dart of Death in the Hand of Time—
That hand which mov'd on the dial !

As she went with her taper up the stair,
How little her swollen eye was aware
That the shadow which follow'd was double !
Or when she clos'd her chamber door,
It was shutting out, and for evermore,
The world—and its worldly trouble.

Little she dreamt, as she laid aside
Her jewels—after one glance of pride—
They were solemn bequests to Vanity—
Or when her robe she began to doff,
That she stood so near to the putting off
Of the flesh that clothes humanity.

And when she quench'd the taper's light,
How little she thought as the smoke took flight,
That her day was done—and merg'd in a night
Of dreams and duration uncertain—

Or, along with her own,
That a hand of bone
Was closing mortality's curtain !

But life is sweet, and mortality blind,
And youth is hopeful, and Fate is kind
In concealing the day of sorrow ;
And enough is the present tense of toil—
For this world is, to all, a stiffish soil—
And the mind flies back with a glad recoil
From the debts not due till to-morrow.

Wherefore else does the Spirit fly
And bid its daily cares good-bye,
Along with its daily clothing ?
Just as the Felon condemn'd to die—
With a very natural loathing—
Leaving the Sheriff to dream of ropes,
From his gloomy cell in a vision elopes,
To caper on sunny greens and slopes,
Instead of the dance upon nothing.

Thus, even thus, the Countess slept,
While Death still nearer and nearer crept,
Like the Thane who smote the sleeping—
But her mind was busy with early joys,
Her golden treasures and golden toys,
That flash'd a bright
And golden light
Under lids still red with weeping.

The golden doll that she used to hug !
Her coral of gold, and the golden mug !
Her godfather's golden presents !
The golden service she had at her meals,
The golden watch, and chain, and seals,
Her golden scissors, and thread, and reels,
And her golden fishes and pheasants !

The golden guineas in silken purse—
And the Golden Legends she heard from her nurse,
Of the Mayor in his gilded carriage—
And London streets that were pav'd with gold—
And the Golden Eggs that were laid of old—
With each golden thing
To the golden ring
At her own auriferous Marriage !

And still the golden light of the sun
Through her golden dream appear'd to run,
Though the night that roar'd without was one
To terrify seamen or gipsies—
While the moon, as if in malicious mirth,
Kept peeping down at the ruffled earth,
As though she enjoyed the tempest's birth,
In revenge of her old eclipses.

But vainly, vainly, the thunder fell,
For the soul of the sleeper was under a spell
That Time had lately embitter'd—
The Count, as once at her feet he knelt—
That Foot which now he wanted to melt!
But—hush!—'twas a stir at her pillow she felt—
And some object before her glitter'd.

'Twas the Golden Leg!—she knew its gleam!
And up she started, and tried to scream,—
But ev'n in the moment she started—
Down came the limb with a frightful smash,
And, lost in the universal flash
That her eyeballs made at so mortal a crash,
The Spark, called Vital, departed!

Gold, still gold! hard, yellow, and cold,
For gold she had lived, and she died for gold—
By a golden weapon—not oaken;
In the morning they found her all alone—
Stiff, and bloody, and cold as stone—
But her Leg, the Golden Leg, was gone,
And the 'Golden Bowl was broken!'

Gold, still gold! it haunted her yet—
At the Golden Lion the Inquest met—
Its foreman, a carver and gilder—
And the jury debated from twelve till three
What the Verdict ought to be,
And they brought it in as Felo de Se,
'Because her own Leg had killed her!'

Her Moral.

Gold ! Gold ! Gold ! Gold !
 Bright and yellow, hard and cold,
 Molten, graven, hammer'd, and roll'd ;
 Heavy to get, and light to hold ;
 Hoarded, barter'd, bought, and sold,
 Stolen, borrow'd, squander'd, doled :
 Spurn'd by the young, but hugg'd by the old
 To the very verge of the churchyard mould ;
 Price of many a crime untold ;
 Gold ! Gold ! Gold ! Gold :
 Good or bad a thousand fold !

How widely its agencies vary—
 To save—to ruin—to curse to bless—
 As even its minted coins express,
 Now stamp'd with the image of Good Queen Bess,
 And now of a Bloody Mary !

A TALE OF A TRUMPET

'Old woman, old woman, will you go a-shearing ?
 Speak a little louder, for I'm very hard of hearing.'—
Old Ballad.

OF all old women hard of hearing
 The deafest, sure, was Dame Eleanor Spearing !
 On her head, it is true,
 Two flaps there grew,
 That serv'd for a pair of gold rings to go through,
 But for any purpose of ears in a parley,
 They heard no more than ears of barley.
 No hint was needed from D. E. F.
 You saw in her face that the woman was deaf :
 From her twisted mouth to her eyes so peery,
 Each queer feature ask'd a query ;
 A look that said in a silent way,
 'Who ? and What ? and How ? and Eh ?
 I'd give my ears to know what you say !'

And well she might ! for each auricular
Was deaf as a post—and that post in particular
That stands at the corner of Dyott-street now,
And never hears a word of a row !
Ears that might serve her now and then
As extempore racks for an idle pen,
Or to hang with hoops from jewellers' shops
With coral, ruby, or garnet drops ;
Or, provided the owner so inclin'd,
Ears to stick a blister behind ;
But as for hearing wisdom, or wit,
Falsehood, or folly, or tell-tale-tit,
Or politics, whether of Fox or Pitt,
Sermon, lecture, or musical bit,
Harp, piano, fiddle, or kit,
They might as well, for any such wish,
Have been butter'd, done brown, and laid in a dish !

She was deaf as a post,—as said before—
And as deaf as twenty similes more,
Including the adder, that deafest of snakes,
Which never hears the coil it makes.
She was deaf as a house—which modern tricks
Of language would call as deaf as bricks—
For all her human kind were dumb,
Her drum, indeed, was so muffled a drum,
That none could get a sound to come,
Unless the Devil that had Two Sticks !
She was deaf as a stone—say, one of the stones
Demosthenes suck'd to improve his tones ;
And surely deafness no further could reach
Than to be in his mouth without hearing his speech !
She was deaf as a nut—for nuts, no doubt,
Are deaf to the grub that's hollowing out—
As deaf, alas ! as the dead and forgotten—
(Gray has noticed the waste of breath,
In addressing the 'dull, cold ear of death'),
Or the Felon's ear that was stuff'd with Cotton—
Or Charles the First *in statue quo* ;
Or the still-born figures of Madame Tussaud,

With their eyes of glass, and their hair of flax,
That only stare whatever you 'ax,'
For their ears, you know, are nothing but wax.

She was deaf as the ducks that swam in the pond,
And wouldn't listen to Mrs. Bond,—
As deaf as any Frenchman appears,
When he puts his shoulders into his ears:
And—whatever the citizen tells his son—
As deaf as Gog and Magog at one!
Or, still to be a simile-seeker,
As deaf as dogs'-ears to Enfield's Speaker!

She was deaf as any tradesman's dummy,
Or as Pharaoh's mother's mother's mummy;
Whose organs, for fear of our modern sceptics,
Were plugg'd with gums and antiseptics.

She was deaf as a nail—that you cannot hammer
A meaning into for all your clamour—
There never *was* such a deaf old Gammer

So formed to worry

Both Lindley and Murray,

By having no ear for Music or Grammar!
Deaf to sounds, as a ship out of soundings,
Deaf to verbs, and all their compoundings,
Adjective, noun, and adverb, and particle,
Deaf to even the definite article—

No verbal message was worth a pin,
Though you hired an earwig to carry it in!
In short, she was twice as deaf as Deaf Burke,
Or all the Deafness in Yearsley's Work,
Who in spite of his skill in hardness of hearing,
Boring, blasting, and pioneering,

To give the dummy organ a clearing,
Could never have cured Dame Eleanor Spearing.

Of course the loss was a great privation,
For one of her sex—whatever her station—
And none the less that the Dame had a turn
For making all families one concern,
And learning whatever there was to learn

In the prattling, tattling village of Tringham—
 As who wore silk ? and who wore gingham ?
 And what the Atkins's shop might bring 'em ?

How the Smiths contrived to live ? and whether
 The fourteen Murphys all pigg'd together ?
 The wages per week of the Weavers and Skinners,
 And what they boil'd for their Sunday dinners—
 What plates the Bugsbys had on the shelf,
 Crockery, china, wooden, or delf ?
 And if the parlour of Mrs. O'Grady
 Had a wicked French print, or Death and the Lady ?
 Did Snip and his wife continue to jangle ?
 Had Mrs. Wilkinson sold her mangle ?
 What liquor was drunk by Jones and Brown ?
 And the weekly score they ran up at the Crown ?
 If the Cobbler could read, and believed in the Pope ?
 And how the Grubbs were off for soap ?

If the Snobbs had furnish'd their room up-stairs,
 And how they managed for tables and chairs,
 Beds, and other household affairs,
 Iron, wooden, and Staffordshire wares ?

And if they could muster a whole pair of bellows ?
 In fact she had much of the spirit that lies
 Perdu in a notable set of Paul Prys,

By courtesy call'd Statistical Fellows—
 A prying, spying, inquisitive clan,
 Who have gone upon much of the self-same plan,
 Jotting the Labouring Class's riches ;
 And after poking in pot and pan,

And routing garments in want of stiches,
 Have ascertain'd that a working man

Wears a pair and a quarter of average breeches !

But this, alas ! from her loss of hearing,
 Was all a seal'd book to Dame Eleanor Spearing ;
 And often her tears would rise to their founts—
 Supposing a little scandal at play
 'Twixt Mrs. O'Fie and Mrs. Au Fait—
 That she 'couldn't audit the Gossips' accounts.

'Tis true to her cottage still they came,
And ate her muffins just the same,
And drank the tea of the widow'd Dame,
And never swallow'd a thimble the less
Of something the Reader is left to guess,
For all the deafness of Mrs. S.,

Who *saw* them talk, and chuckle, and cough,
But to *see* and not share in the social flow,
She might as well have liv'd, you know,
In one of the houses in Owen's Row,

Near the New River Head, with its water cut off!

And yet the almond-oil she had tried,
And fifty infallible things beside,
Hot, and cold, and thick, and thin,
Dabb'd, and dribbled, and squirted in:
But all remedies fail'd; and though some it was clear
(Like the brandy and salt

We now exalt)

Had made a noise in the public ear,
She was just as deaf as ever, poor dear!

At last—one very fine day in June—
Suppose her sitting,

Busily knitting,

And humming she didn't quite know what tune;

For nothing she heard but a sort of a whizz,
Which unless the sound of the circulation,
Or of Thoughts in the process of fabrication,
By a Spinning-Jennyish operation,

It's hard to say what buzzing it is.

However, except that ghost of a sound,
She sat in a silence most profound—

The cat was purring about the mat,
But her Mistress heard no more of that

Than if it had been a boatswain's cat:

And as for the clock the moments nicking,

The Dame only gave it credit for ticking.

The bark of her dog she did not catch;

Nor yet the click of the lifted latch;

Nor yet the creak of the opening door ;
Nor yet the fall of a foot on the floor—
But she saw the shadow that crept on her gown
And turned its skirt of a darker brown.

And lo ! a man !—a pedlar ! ay, marry,
With the little back-shop that such tradesmen carry,
Stock'd with brooches, ribbons, and rings,
Spectacles, razors, and other odd things,
For lad and lass, as Autolycus sings ;
A chapman for goodness and cheapness of ware,
Held a fair dealer enough at a fair,
But deem'd a piratical sort of invader
By him we dub the 'regular trader,'
Who—luring the pasengers in as they pass
By lamps, gay panels, and mouldings of brass,
And windows with only one huge pane of glass,
And his name in gilt characters, German or Roman,—
If he isn't a Pedlar, at least is a Showman !

However, in the stranger came,
And, the moment he met the eyes of the Dame,
Threw her as knowing a nod as though
He had known her fifty long years ago ;
And presto ! before she could utter 'Jack'—
Much less 'Robinson'—open'd his pack—

And then from amongst his portable gear,
With even more than a pedlar's tact,
(Slick himself might have envied the act)—
Before she had time to be deaf, in fact—

Popp'd a trumpet into her ear.

'There, ma'am ! try it !

You needn't buy it—

The last New Patent—and nothing comes nigh it
For affording the Deaf, at little expense,
The sense of hearing, and hearing of sense !
A Real Blessing—and no mistake,
Invented for poor Humanity's sake ;
For what can be a greater privation
Than playing dummy to all creation,
And only looking at conversation—

Great Philosophers talking like Platos,
And Members of Parliament moral as Catos,
And your ears as dull as waxy potatoes !
Not to name the mischievous quizzers,
Sharp as knives, but double as scissors,
Who get you to answer quite by guess
Yes for No, and No for Yes.'
(' That 's very true,' says Dame Eleanor S.)

' Try it again ! No harm in trying—
I'm sure you'll find it worth your buying,
A little practice—that is all—
And you'll hear a whisper, however small,
Through an Act of Parliament party-wall,—
Ev'ry syllable clear as day,
And even what people are going to say—
I wouldn't tell a lie, I wouldn't,
But my Trumpets have heard what Solomon's
couldn't.

And as for Scott he promises fine,
But can he warrant his horns like mine
Never to hear what a Lady shouldn't—
Only a guinea—and can't take less.'
(' That 's very dear,' says Dame Eleanor S.)

' Dear !—Oh dear, to call it dear !
Why it isn't a horn you buy, but an ear ;
Only think, and you'll find on reflection
You're bargaining, ma'am, for the Voice of Affection ;
For the language of Wisdom, and Virtue, and Truth,
And the sweet little innocent prattle of youth :
Not to mention the striking of clocks—
Cackle of hens—crowing of cocks—
Lowling of cow, and bull, and ox—
Bleating of pretty pastoral flocks—
Murmur of waterfall over the rocks—
Every sound that Echo mocks—
Vocals, fiddles, and musical-box—
And zounds ! to call such a concert dear !
But I mustn't swear with my horn in your ear.

Why, in buying that Trumpet you buy all those
That Harper, or any trumpeter, blows
At the Queen's Levees or the Lord Mayor's Shows,
At least as far as the music goes,
Including the wonderful lively sound,
Of the one-key'd bugles all the year round:
Come—suppose we call it a pound!

'Come,' said the talkative Man of the Pack,
'Before I put my box on my back,
For this elegant, useful Conductor of Sound,
Come—suppose we call it a pound!

'Only a pound! it's only the price
Of hearing a Concert once or twice,
It's only the fee
You might give Mr. C.,
And after all not hear his advice,
But common prudence would bid you stump it;
For, not to enlarge,
It's the regular charge

At a Fancy Fair for a penny trumpet.
Lord! what's a pound to the blessing of hearing!'
('A pound's a pound,' said Dame Eleanor Spearing.)

'Try it again! no harm in trying!
A pound's a pound there's no denying
But think what thousands and thousands of pounds
We pay for nothing but hearing sounds,
Sounds of Equity, Justice, and Law,
Parliamentary jabber and jaw,
Pious cant and moral saw,
Hocus-pocus, and Mon-tong-paw,
And empty sounds not worth a straw—
Why it costs a guinea, as I'm a sinner,
To hear the sounds at a Public Dinner!
One pound one thrown into the puddle,
To listen to Fiddle, Faddle, and Fuddle!
Not to forget the sounds we buy
From those who sell their sounds so high,

That, unless the Managers pitch it strong,
To get a Signora to warble a song,
You must fork out the blunt with a haymaker's prong !

'It's not the thing for me—I know it,
To crack my own Trumpet up and blow it ;
But it is the best, and time will show it.

There was Mrs. F.

So very deaf,

That she might have worn a percussion-cap,
And been knock'd on the head without hearing it snap.
Well, I sold her a horn, and the very next day
She heard from her husband at Botany Bay !
Come—eighteen shillings—that's very low,
You'll save the money as shillings go,
And I never knew so bad a lot,
By hearing whether they ring or not !

'Eighteen shillings ! it's worth the price,
Supposing you're delicate minded and rather nice,
To have the medical man of your choice,
Instead of the one with the strongest voice—
Who comes and asks you, how's your liver,
And where you ache, and whether you shiver ;
And as to your nerves so apt to quiver
As if he was hailing a boat on the river !
And then with a shout, like Pat in a riot,
Tells you to keep yourself perfectly quiet !
Or a tradesman comes—as tradesmen will—
Short and crusty about his bill,

Of patience, indeed, a perfect scorner,
And because you're deaf and unable to pay,
Shouts whatever he has to say,
In a vulgar voice, that goes over the way,

Down the street and round the corner !
Come—speak your mind—it's "No or Yes.""
('I've half a mind,' said Dame Eleanor S.)

'Try it again—no harm in trying,
Of course you hear me, as easy as lying—

No pain at all, like a surgical trick,
To make you squall, and struggle, and kick,
Like Juno, or Rose,

Whose ear undergoes
Such horrid tugs at membrane and gristle,
For being as deaf as yourself to a whistle!

‘You may go to surgical chaps if you choose,
Who will blow up your tubes like copper flues,
Or cut your tonsils right away,
As you’d shell out your almonds for Christmas-day;
And after all a matter of doubt,
Whether you ever would hear the shout
Of the little blackguards that bawl about,
“There you go with your tonsils out!”

Why I knew a deaf Welshman, who came from
Glamorgan

On purpose to try a surgical spell,
And paid a guinea, and might as well
Have called a monkey into his organ!

For the Aurist only took a mug,
And pour’d in his ear some acoustical drug,
That, instead of curing, deafened him rather,
As Hamlet’s uncle served Hamlet’s father!
That’s the way with your surgical gentry!

And happy your luck

If you don’t get stuck
Through your liver and lights at a royal entry,
Because you never answer’d the sentry!

‘Try it again, dear madam, try it!
Many would sell their beds to buy it.
I warrant you often wake up in the night,
Ready to shake to a jelly with fright,
And up you must get to strike a light,
And down you go, in you know what,
Whether the weather is chilly or not,
That’s the way a cold is got,—
To see if you heard a noise or not!

'Why, bless you, a woman with organs like yours
Is hardly safe to step out of doors!
Just fancy a horse that comes full pelt,
But as quiet as if he was "shod with felt,"
Till he rushes against you with all his force,
And then I needn't describe the course,
While he kicks you about without remorse,
How awkward it is to be groom'd by a horse!
Or a bullock comes, as mad as King Lear,
And you never dream that the brute is near,
Till he pokes his horn right into your ear,
Whether you like the thing or lump it,—
And all for want of buying a trumpet!

'I'm not a female to fret and vex,
But if I belonged to the sensitive sex,
Exposed to all sorts of indelicate sounds,
I wouldn't be deaf for a thousand pounds.

'Lord! only think of chucking a copper
To Jack or Bob with a timber limb,
Who looks as if he was singing a hymn,
Instead of a song that's very improper!

'Or just suppose in a public place
You see a great fellow a-pulling a face,
With his staring eyes and his mouth like an O,—
And how is a poor deaf lady to know,
The lower orders are up to such games—
If he's calling "Green Peas," or calling her names?'
('They're tenpence a peck!' said the deafest of Dames.)

' 'Tis strange what very strong advising,
By word of mouth, or advertising,
By chalking on walls, or placarding on vans,
With fifty other different plans,
The very high pressure in fact of pressing,
It needs to persuade one to purchase a blessing!
Whether the Soothing American Syrup,
A Safety Hat, or a Safety Stirrup,—
Infallible Pills for the human frame,
Or Rowland's O-don't-O (an ominous name!)

A Doudney's suit which the shape so hits
That it beats all others into *fits* ;
A Mechi's Razor for beards unshorn,
Or a Ghost-of-a-Whisper-Catching Horn !

'Try it again, Ma'am, only try !'
Was still the voluble Pedlar's cry ;
'It's a great privation, there's no dispute,
To live like the dumb unsociable brute,
And hear no more of the *pro* and *con*,
And how Society's going on,
Than Mumbo Jumbo or Prester John,
And all for the want of this *Sine Quâ Non* ;

Whereas with a horn that never offends,
You may join the genteelest party that is,
And enjoy all the scandal, and gossip, and quiz.

And be certain to hear of your absent friends—
Not that elegant ladies, in fact,
In genteel society ever detract,
Or lend a brush when a friend is black'd,
At least as a mere malicious act,
But only talk scandal for fear some fool
Should think they were bred at *Charity-School*.

Or, maybe, you like a little flirtation,
Which even the most Don Juanish rake
Would surely object to undertake

At the same high pitch as an altercation.

'It's not for me, of course, to judge
How much a Deaf Lady ought to begrudge,
But half-a-guinea seems no great matter—
Letting alone more rational patter—
Only to hear a parrot chatter :
Not to mention that feather'd wit,
The Starling, who speaks when his tongue is slit ;
The Pies and Jays that utter words,
And other Dicky Gossips of birds,
That talk with as much good sense and decorum,
As many *Beaks* who belong to the Quorum.

'Try it—buy it—say ten and six—
 The lowest price a miser could fix!
 I don't pretend with horns of mine,
 Like some in the advertising line,
 To "*magnify sounds*" on such marvellous scales,
 That the Sounds of a Cod seem as big as a Whale's;
 But popular rumours, right or wrong,
 Charity Sermons, short or long,—
 Lecture, Speech, Concerto, or Song,
 All noises and voices, feeble or strong,
 From the hum of a gnat to the clash of a gong,
 This tube will deliver distinct and clear;

Or supposing by chance

You wish to dance,

Why, it's putting a *Horn-pipe* into your ear!

'Try it—buy it!

Buy it—try it!

The last New Patent, and nothing comes nigh it,

For guiding sounds to their proper tunnel!

Only try till the end of June,

And if you and the Trumpet are out of tune

I'll turn it gratis into a Funnel!'

In short, the Pedlar so beset her,—

Lord Bacon couldn't have gammon'd her better,—

With flatteries plump and indirect,

And plied his tongue with such effect,

A tongue that could almost have butter'd a crumpet,—

The deaf Old Woman bought the Trumpet.

* * * * *

The Pedlar was gone. With the Horn's assistance,

She heard his steps die away in the distance;

And then she heard the tick of the clock,

The purring of Puss, and the snoring of Shock;

And she purposely dropp'd a pin that was little,

And heard it fall as plain as a skittle!

'Twas a wonderful Horn, to be but just!

Nor meant to gather dust, must and rust;

So in half a jiffy, or less than that,
In her scarlet cloak and her steeple-hat,
Like old Dame Trot, but without her Cat,
The Gossip was hunting all Tringham thorough—
As if she meant to canvass the Borough,
Trumpet in hand, or up to the cavity,
And sure, had the Horn been one of those
The wild Rhinoceros wears on his nose,
It couldn't have ripp'd up more depravity!

Depravity! Mercy shield her ears!
'Twas plain enough that her village peers
In the ways of vice were no raw beginners:
For whenever she rais'd the tube to her drum
Such sounds were transmitted as only come
From the very Brass Band of human Sinners!
Ribald jest and blasphemous curse
(Bunyan never vented worse),
With all those weeds, not flowers, of speech
Which the Seven Dialecticians teach;
Filthy Conjunctions, and dissolute Nouns,
And Particles pick'd from the Kennels of towns,
With Irregular Verbs for irregular jobs,
Chiefly Active in rows and mobs,
Picking Possessive Pronouns' fobs;
And Interjections as bad as a blight,
Or an Eastern blast, to the blood and the sight—
Fanciful phrases for crime and sin,
And smacking of vulgar lips where gin,
Garlic, tobacco, and offals go in—
A jargon so truly adapted, in fact,
To each thievish, obscene, and ferocious act,
So fit for the brute with the human shape,
Savage Baboon, or libidinous Ape,
From their ugly mouths it will certainly come,
Should they ever get weary of shamming dumb!

Alas! for the voice of Virtue and Truth,
And the sweet little innocent prattle of Youth!

The smallest urchin whose tongue could tang,
Shock'd the Dame with a volley of slang,
Fit for Fagin's juvenile gang ;

While the charity chap,
With his muffin-cap,

His crimson coat, and his badge so garish,
Playing at dumps, or pitch in the hole,
Curs'd his eyes, limbs, body and soul,
As if they didn't belong to the Parish !

'Twas awful to hear, as she went along,
The wicked words of the popular song ;
Or supposing she listened—as Gossips will—
At a door ajar, or a window agape,
To catch the sounds they allowed to escape,
Those sounds belonged to Depravity still !

The dark allusion,—or bolder brag
Of the dexterous 'dodge,' and the lots of 'swag,'
The plunder'd house—or the stolen nag—
The blazing rick, or the darker crime,
That quench'd the spark before its time—
The wanton speech of the wife immoral—
The noise of drunken or deadly quarrel,
With savage menace which threaten'd the life,
Till the heart seem'd merely a strop for '*the Knife*' ;
The human liver, no better than that
Which is sliced and thrown to an old woman's cat ;
And the head, so useful for shaking and nodding,
To be punch'd into holes, like a shocking bad hat,
That is only fit to be punch'd into wadding !

In short, wherever she turn'd the Horn
To the highly-bred or the lowly-born,—
The working man, who looked over the hedge—
Or the Mother nursing her infant pledge—
The sober Quaker, averse to quarrels—
Or the Governess pacing the village thro',
With her twelve Young Ladies, two and two,
Looking, as such young ladies do,
Truss'd by Decorum and stuff'd with Morals—

Whether she listen'd to Hob or Bob,
 Nob or Snob, the Squire on his cob,
 Or Trudge and his ass at a tinkering job,—
 To the Saint who expounded at Little Zion—
 Or the Sinner who kept the Golden Lion—
 The man teetotally wean'd from liquor—
 The Beadle, the Clerk, or the Reverend Vicar—
 Nay, the very Pie in its cage of wicker,—
 She gather'd such meanings, double or single,
 That, like the bell
 With 'muffins to sell,'
 Her ear was kept in a constant tingle!

But this was nought to the tales of shame,
 The constant runnings of evil fame,
 Foul, and dirty, and black as ink,
 That her ancient Cronies, with nod and wink,
 Pour'd in her horn like slops in a sink:

While sitting in conclave, as gossips do,
 With their Hyson or Howqua, black or green,
 And not a little of feline spleen

Lapp'd up in 'Catty Packages,' too,
 To give a zest to the sipping and supping;
 For still, by some invisible tether,
 Scandal and Tea are link'd together,

As surely as Scarification and Cupping—
 Yet never since Scandal drank Bohea,
 Or sloe, or whatever it happen'd to be,—

For some grocerly thieves

Turn over new leaves,

Without much amending their lives or their tea—
 No, never since cup was fill'd or stirr'd,
 Were such vile and horrible anecdotes heard,
 As blacken'd their neighbours of either gender,
 Especially that which is call'd the Tender,
 But instead of the softness we fancy therewith,
 Was harden'd in vice as the vice of a smith
 Women!—the wretches had soil'd and marr'd

Whatever to womanly nature belongs.
 For the marriage-tie they had no regard—

Nay, sped their mates to the Sexton's yard,
(Like Madame Laffarge, with poisonous pinches
Cutting off her L—— by inches)—
And as for drinking, they drank so hard,
That they drank their flat-irons, pokers, and tongs!

The men?—they fought and gambled at fairs;
And poached—and didn't respect grey hairs—
Stole linen, money, plate, poultry, and corses;
And broke in houses as well as horses;
Unfolded folds to kill their own mutton;
And would their own Mothers and Wives for a button;—
But not to repeat the deeds they did,
Backsliding in spite of all moral skid,
If all were true that fell from the tongue
There wasn't a villager, old or young,
But deserved to be whipt, imprison'd, or hung,
Or sent on those travels which nobody hurries
To publish at Colburn's, or Longman's, or Murray's.

Meanwhile the Trumpet, *con amore*,
Transmitted each vile diabolical story,
And gave the least whisper of slips and falls
As that Gallery does in the Dome of St. Paul's,
Which, as all the world knows by practice or print,
Is famous for making the most of a hint.

Not a murmur of shame,

Or buzz of blame,

Not a flying report that flew at a name,
Not a plausible gloss, or significant note,
Not a word in the scandalous circles afloat,
From the beam in the eye to diminutive mote,
But vortex-like that tube of tin
Suck'd the censorious particle in:

And, truth to tell, for as willing an organ
As ever listened to serpent hiss,
Nor took the viperous sound amiss,

On the snaky head of an ancient Gorgon!

The Dame, it is true, would mutter 'Shocking!'
And give her head a sorrowful rocking;

And make a clucking with palate and tongue,
Like the call of Partlet to gather her young,—
A sound when human that always proclaims
At least a thousand pities and shames ;

But still the darker the tale of sin,
Like certain folks when calamities burst,
Who find a comfort in 'hearing the worst'—
The further she poked the Trumpet in.

Nay, worse, whatever she heard, she spread
East and West, and North and South,
Like the ball which, according to Captain Z,
Went in at his ear and came out at his mouth.

What wonder, between the Horn and the Dame,
Such mischief was made wherever they came,
That the parish of Tringham was all in a flame ?

For although it requires such loud discharges,
Such peals of thunder as rumbled at Lear,
To turn the smallest of table-beer,
A little whisper breathed into the ear

Will sour a temper 'as sour as varges.'
In fact, such very ill blood there grew,

From this private circulation of stories,
That the nearest neighbours the village through,
Look'd at each other as yellow and blue,
As any electioneering crew

Wearing the colours of Whigs and Tories.

Ah ! well the Poet said, in sooth,
That 'whispering tongues can poison Truth ;'
Yea—like a dose of Oxalic Acid,
Wrench and convulse poor Peace, the placid,
And rack dear Love with internal fuel,
Like arsenic pastry, or what is as cruel,
Sugar of lead to sweeten gruel—

At least such torments began to wring 'em

From the very morn

When that mischievous Horn
Caught the whisper of tongues in Tringham.

The Social Clubs dissolved in huffs,
And the Sons of Harmony came to cuffs,
While feuds arose and family quarrels,
That discomposed the mechanics of morals,
For screws were loose between brother and brother,
While sisters fastened their nails on each other;
Such wrangle, and jangle, and miff, and tiff,
And spar, and jar, and breezes as stiff
As ever upset a friendship, or skiff!
The plighted lovers who used to walk,
Refused to meet, and declined to talk;
And wish'd for *two* moons to reflect the sun
That they mightn't look together on one;
While wedded affection ran so low,
That the oldest John Anderson snubbed his Jo,
And instead of the toddle adown the hill,
 Hand in hand,
 As the song has plann'd,
Scratch'd her penniless out of his will!

In short, to describe what came to pass
In a true, tho' somewhat theatrical way,
Instead of 'Love in a Village'—alas!
The piece they perform'd was 'The Devil to Pay!'

However, as secrets are brought to light,
And mischief comes home like chickens at night;
And rivers are track'd throughout their course;
And forgeries trac'd to their proper source—
 And the sow that ought
 By the ear is caught—
And the sin to the sinful door is brought;
And the cat at last escapes from the bag;
And the saddle is placed on the proper nag;
And the fog blows off, and the key is found;
And the faulty scent is picked out by the hound;
And the fact turns up like a worm from the ground;
And the matter gets wind to waft it about;
And a hint goes abroad and the murder is out—

And the riddle is guess'd and the puzzle is known—
So the truth was sniff'd, and the Trumpet was *blown*!

* * * * *
* * * * *

'Tis a day in November—a day of fog—
But the Tringham people are all agog,
Fathers, Mothers, and Mothers' Sons,
With sticks, and staves, and swords, and guns,
As if in pursuit of a rabid dog—
But their voices—raised to the highest pitch,
Declare that the game is a Witch!—a Witch!—

Over the Green, and along by the George,
Past the Stocks, and the Church, and the Forge,
And round the Pound, and skirting the Pond,
Till they come to the whitewash'd cottage beyond,
And there at the door they muster and cluster,
And thump, and kick, and bellow, and bluster,
Enough to put Old Nick in a fluster!
A noise, indeed, so loud and long,
And mix'd with expressions so very strong,
That supposing according to popular fame
'Wise Woman' and Witch to be the same,
No Hag with a broom would unwisely stop,
But up and away through the chimney-top;
Whereas the moment they burst the door,
Planted fast on her sanded floor,
With her Trumpet up to her organ of hearing,
Lo and behold! Dame Eleanor Spearing!

Oh then arises the fearful shout!
Bawl'd and scream'd and bandied about,
'Seize her! Drag the old Jezebel out!'
While the Beadle, the foremost of all the band,
Snatches the Horn from her trembling hand,
And after a pause of doubt and fear,
Puts it up to his sharpest ear.

'Now silence—silence—one and all!'
For the Clerk is quoting from Holy Paul!

But before he rehearses

A couple of verses,

The Beadle lets the Trumpet fall:
For instead of the words so pious and humble,
He hears a supernatural grumble!

Enough, enough, and more than enough!—

Twenty impatient hands, and rough,

By arm, and leg, and neck, and scruff,

Apron, kerchief, gown of stuff,

Cap, and pinner, sleeve, and cuff,

Are clutching the Witch wherever they can,

With the spite of Woman and fury of Man.

And then—but first they kill her cat,

And murder her dog on the very mat—

And crush the infernal Trumpet flat—

And then they hurry her through the door

She never, never will enter more.

Away! away! down the dusty lane

They pull her, and haul her, with might and main—

And happy the hawbuck, Tom or Harry,

Dandie, or Sandy, Jerry or Larry,

Who happens to 'get a leg to carry!'

And happy the foot that can give her a kick;

And happy the hand that can find a brick;

And happy the fingers that hold a stick,

Knife to cut, or pin to prick;

And happy the Boy who can lend her a lick;

Nay, happy the Urchin, Charity-bred,

Who can shy very nigh to her wicked old head!

Alas! to think how people's creeds

Are contradicted by people's deeds!

But though the wishes that Witches utter

Can play the most diabolical rigs;

Send styes in the eye—and measle the pigs—

Grease horses' heels—and spoil the butter—

Smut and mildew the corn on the stalk,—

And turn new milk to water and chalk,—

Blight apples—and give the chickens the pip—
 And cramp the stomach—and cripple the hip—
 And waste the body—and addle the eggs—
 And give a Baby bandy legs—
 Or freeze the blood with such wicked chills
 That the teeth must chatter like Harry Gill's :—
 Though in common belief a Witch's curse
 Involves all these horrible things, and worse,
 As ignorant bumpkins all profess,
 No Bumpkin makes a poke the less
 At the back or the ribs of old Eleanor S.,
 As if she were only a sack of barley ;
 Or gives her credit for greater might
 Than the Powers of Darkness confer at night
 On that other old woman, the parish Charley !

Ay, now 's the time for a witch to call
 On her Imps and Sucklings one and all—
 Newes, Pyewacket, or Peck in the Crown,
 (As Matthew Hopkins has handed them down)
 Dick, and Willet, and Sugar-and-Sack,
 Greedy Grizel, Jamara the Black,
 Vinegar Tom and the rest of the pack—
 Aye, now 's the nick for her friend Old Harry
 To come ' with his tail ' like the bold Glengarry,
 And drive her foes from their savage job
 As a mad Black Bullock would scatter a mob :—

But no such matter is down in the bond ;
 And spite of her cries that never cease,
 But scare the ducks and astonish the geese,
 The Dame is dragg'd to the fatal pond !

And now they come to the water's brim,
 And in they bundle her, sink or swim,
 Though it's twenty to one that the wretch must drown,
 With twenty sticks to hold her down ;
 Including the help to the self same end,
 Which a travelling Pedlar stops to lend.—
 A Pedlar !—Yes !—the same !—the same !
 Who sold the Horn to the drowning Dame ;

And now is foremost amid the stir,
With a token only reveal'd to her ;
A token that makes her shudder and shriek,
And point with her finger—and strive to speak—
But before she can utter the name of the Devil,
Her head is under the water's level !

MORAL

There are folks about Town—to name no names—
Who much resemble that deafest of Dames ;
And over their tea, and muffins and crumpets,
Circulate many a scandalous word,
And whisper tales they could only have heard
Through some such Diabolical Trumpets.

THE DEMON-SHIP

'Twas off the Wash—the sun went down—the sea
look'd black and grim,
For stormy clouds, with murky fleece, were mustering
at the brim ;
Titanic shades ! enormous gloom !—as if the solid night
Of Erebus rose suddenly to seize upon the light !
It was a time for mariners to bear a wary eye,
With such a dark conspiracy between the sea and sky !
Down went my helm—close reef'd—the tack held freely
in my hand—
With ballast snug—I put about, and scudded for the
land.
Loud hiss'd the sea beneath her lee—my little boat
flew fast,
But faster still the rushing storm came borne upon
the blast.
Lord ! what a roaring hurricane beset the straining sail !
What furious sleet, with level drift, and fierce assaults
of hail !

What darksome caverns yawn'd before ! what jagged
steeps behind !

Like battle-steeds, with foamy manes, wild tossing in
the wind.

Each after each sank down astern, exhausted in the
chase,

But where it sank another rose and gallop'd in its place ;
As black as night—they turned to white, and cast
against the cloud

A snowy sheet, as if each surge upturn'd a sailor's
shroud :—

Still flew my boat ; alas ! alas ! her course was nearly
run !

Behold yon fatal billow rise—ten billows heap'd in one !
With fearful speed the dreary mass came rolling, rolling,
fast,

As if the scooping sea contain'd one only wave at last !
Still on it came, with horrid roar, a swift pursuing
grave ;

It seem'd as though some cloud had turn'd its huge-
ness to a wave !

Its briny sleet began to beat beforehand in my face—
I felt the rearward keel begin to climb its swelling
base !

I saw its alpine hoary head impending over mine !
Another pulse—and down it rush'd—an avalanche of
brine !

Brief pause had I, on God to cry, or think of wife and
home ;

The waters clos'd—and when I shriek'd, I shriek'd
below the foam !

Beyond that rush I have no hint of any after deed—
For I was tossing on the waste, as senseless as a weed.

* * * * *

' Where am I ? in the breathing world, or in the world
of death ? '

With sharp and sudden pang I drew another birth of
breath ;

My eyes drank in a doubtful sight, my ears a doubtful sound—

And was that ship a *real* ship whose tackle seem'd around ?

A moon, as if the earthly moon, was shining up aloft ;
But were those beams the very beams that I had seen
so oft ?

A face, that mock'd the human face, before me watch'd alone ;

But were those eyes the eyes of man that look'd against
my own ?

Oh ! never may the moon again disclose me such a sight
As met my gaze, when first I look'd, on that accursed
night !

I've seen a thousand horrid shapes begot of fierce
extremes

Of fever ; and most frightful things have haunted in
my dreams—

Hyenas—cats—blood-loving bats—and apes with hate-
ful stare,—

Pernicious snakes, and shaggy bulls—the lion, and
she-bear—

Strong enemies, with Judas looks, of treachery and
spite—

Detested features, hardly dimm'd and banish'd by
the light !

Pale-sheeted ghosts, with gory locks, upstarting from
their tombs—

All phantasies and images that flit in midnight glooms—
Hags, goblins, demons, lemures, have made me all
aghast,—

But nothing like that GRIMLY ONE who stood beside
the mast !

His cheek was black—his brow was black—his eyes
and hair as dark :

His hand was black, and where it touch'd, it left
a sable mark ;

His throat was black, his vest the same, and when
I look'd beneath,

His breast was black—all, all, was black except his
grinning teeth.

His sooty crew were like in hue, as black as Afric
slaves !

Oh, horror ! e'en the ship was black that plough'd
the inky waves !

' Alas ! ' I cried, ' for love of truth and blessed mercy's
sake,

Where am I ? in what dreadful ship ? upon what
dreadful lake ?

What shape is that, so very grim, and black as any coal ?

It is Mahound, the Evil One, and he has gain'd my soul !

Oh, mother dear ! my tender nurse ! dear meadows
that beguil'd

My happy days, when I was yet a little sinless child,—

My mother dear—my native fields, I never more shall
see :

I'm sailing in the Devil's Ship, upon the Devil's Sea ! '

Loud laugh'd that SABLE MARINER, and loudly in
return

His sooty crew sent forth a laugh that rang from stem
to stern—

A dozen pair of grimly cheeks were crumpled on the
nonce—

As many sets of grinning teeth came shining out at
once :

A dozen gloomy shapes at once enjoy'd the merry fit,
With shriek and yell, and oaths as well, like Demons
of the Pit.

They crow'd their fill, and then the Chief made answer
for the whole :—

' Our skins,' said he, ' are black ye see, because we
carry coal ;

You'll find your mother sure enough, and see your
native fields—

For this here ship has pick'd you up—the Mary Ann
of Shields ! '

THE FALL

‘Down, down, down, ten thousand fathoms deep.’—
Count Fathom.

Who does not know that dreadful gulf, where Niagara
 falls,
 Where eagle unto eagle screams, to vulture vulture
 calls ;
 Where down beneath, Despair and Death in liquid
 darkness grope,
 And upward, on the foam there shines a rainbow
 without Hope ;
 While, hung with clouds of Fear and Doubt, the
 unreturning wave
 Suddenly gives an awful plunge, like life into the grave ;
 And many a hapless mortal there hath dived to bale
 or bliss ;
 One—only one—hath ever lived to rise from that
 abyss !
 Oh, Heaven ! it turns me now to ice, with chill of
 fear extreme,
 To think of my frail bark adrift on that tumultuous
 stream !
 In vain with desperate sinews, strung by love of life
 and light,
 I urged that coffin, my canoe, against the current’s
 might :
 On—on—still on—direct for doom, the river rush’d
 in force,
 And fearfully the stream of Time raced with it in its
 course.
 My eyes I closed—I dared not look the way towards
 the goal ;
 But still I view’d the horrid close, and dreamt it in
 my soul.
 Plainly, as through transparent lids, I saw the fleeting
 shore,
 And lofty trees, like winged things, flit by for evermore ;

Plainly,—but with no prophet sense—I heard the
 sullen sound,
 The torrent's voice—and felt the mist, like death-sweat
 gathering round.
 O agony ! O life ! My home ! and those that made
 it sweet :
 Ere I could pray, the torrent lay beneath my very feet.
 With frightful whirl, more swift than thought, I passed
 the dizzy edge,
 Bound after bound, with hideous bruise, I dashed from
 ledge to ledge,
 From crag to crag,—in speechless pain,—from mid-
 night deep to deep ;
 I did not die,—but anguish stunn'd my senses into
 sleep.
 How long entranced, or whither dived, no clue I have
 to find :
 At last the gradual light of life came dawning o'er my
 mind ;
 And through my brain there thrill'd a cry,—a cry as
 shrill as birds'
 Of vulture or of eagle kind, but this was set to words :—
 'It's Edgar Huntley in his cap and nightgown, I
 declares !
 He's been a walking in his sleep, and pitch'd all down
 the stairs !'

THE DESERT-BORN

'Fly to the desert, fly with me.'—*Lady Hester Stanhope.*

TWAS in the wilds of Lebanon, amongst its barren
 hills,—
 To think upon it, even now, my very blood it chills !—
 My sketch-book spread before me, and my pencil in
 my hand,
 I gazed upon the mountain range, the red tumultuous
 sand,

The plummy palms, the sombre firs, the cedars tall and proud,—

When lo ! a shadow pass'd across the paper like a cloud,

And looking up I saw a form, apt figure for the scene,
Methought I stood in presence of some oriental queen !

The turban on her head was white as any driven snow ;

A purple bandalette pass'd o'er the lofty brow below,
And thence upon her shoulders fell, by either jewell'd ear ;

In yellow folds voluminous she wore her long cache-mere ;

Whilst underneath, with ample sleeves, a Turkish robe of silk

Enveloped her in drapery the colour of new milk ;

Yet oft it floated wide in front, disclosing underneath
A gorgeous Persian tunic, rich with many a broider'd wreath,

Compelled by clasps of costly pearl around her neck to meet—

And yellow as the amber were the buskins on her feet !

Of course I bowed my lowest bow—of all the things on earth,

The reverence due to loveliness, to rank, or ancient birth,

To pow'r, to wealth, to genius, or to anything uncommon,

A man should bend the lowest in a *Desert* to a *Woman* !
Yet some strange influence stronger still, though vague and undefin'd,

Compell'd me, and with magic might subdued my soul and mind ;

There was a something in her air that drew the spirit nigh,

Beyond the common witchery that dwells in woman's eye !

With reverence deep, like any slave of that peculiar land,
I bowed my forehead to the earth, and kissed the arid
sand ;

And then I touch'd her garment's hem, devoutly as
a Dervise,

Predestinated (so I felt) for ever to her service.

Nor was I wrong in auguring thus my fortune from her
face,

She knew me, seemingly, as well as any of her race ;

' Welcome ! ' she cried, as I uprose submissive to my
feet ;

' It was ordain'd that you and I should in this desert
meet !

Aye, ages since, before thy soul had burst its prison bars,
This interview was promis'd in the language of the
stars ! '

Then clapping, as the Easterns wont, her all-com-
manding hands,

A score of mounted Arabs came fast spurring o'er the
sands,

Nor rein'd they up their foaming steeds till in my very
face

They blew the breath impetuous and panting from the
race,

' Fear nought,' exclaimed the radiant one, as I sprang
off aloof,

' Thy precious frame need never fear a blow from horse's
hoof !

Thy natal star was fortunate as any orb of birth,

And fate hath held in store for thee the rarest gift of
earth.'

Then turning to the dusky men, that humbly waited
near,

She cried, ' Go bring the BEAUTIFUL—for lo ! the
MAN is here ! '

Off went th' obsequious train as swift as Arab hoofs
could flee.

But Fancy fond outraced them all, with bridle loose
and free,

And brought me back, for love's attack, some fair
Circassian bride,
Or Georgian girl, the Harem's boast, and fit for sultan's
side ;
Methought I lifted up her veil, and saw dark eyes
beneath,
Mild as gazelle's, a snowy brow, ripe lips, and pearly
teeth,
A swanlike neck, a shoulder round, full bosom, and a
waist
Not too compact, and rounded limbs, to oriental taste.
Methought—but here, alas ! alas ! the airy dream to
blight,
Behold the Arabs leading up a mare of milky white !
To tell the truth, without reserve, evasion, or remorse,
The last of creatures in my love or liking is a horse :
Whether in early youth some kick untimely laid me
flat,
Whether from born antipathy, as some dislike a cat,
I never yet could bear the kind, from Meux's giant
steeds
Down to those little bearish cubs of Shetland's shaggy
breeds ;—
As for a warhorse, he that can bestride one is a hero,
Merely to look at such a sight my courage sinks to
zero :
With lightning eyes, and thunder mane, and hurricanes
of legs,
Tempestuous tail—to picture him description vainly
begs !
His fiery nostrils sent forth clouds of smoke instead of
breath—
Nay, was it not a Horse that bore the grisly Shape of
Death ?
Judge then how cold an ague-fit of agony was mine
To see the mistress of my fate, imperious, make a sign
To which my own foreboding soul the cruel sense
supplied :
' Mount, happy man, and *run away* with your Arabian
bride !'

Grim was the smile, and tremulous the voice with
which I spoke,
Like any one's when jesting with a subject not a joke,
So men have trifled with the axe before the fatal stroke.

'Lady, if mine had been the luck in Yorkshire to be born,
Or any of its *ridings*, this would be a blessed morn :
But, hapless one ! I cannot ride—there 's something
in a horse

That I can always honour, but I never could endorse.
To speak still more commercially, in riding I am quite
Averse to running long, and apt to be paid off at sight :
In legal phrase, for every class to understand me still,
I never was in stirrups yet a tenant but at will ;
Or, if you please, in artist terms, I never went a-straddle
On any horse without "a want of keeping" in the
saddle.

In short,' and here I blush'd, abash'd, and held my head
full low,

'I'm one of those whose infant ears have heard the
chimes of Bow !'

The lady smiled, as houris smile, adown from Turkish
skies,

And beams of cruel kindness shone within her hazel
eyes ;

'Stranger,' she said, 'or rather say, my nearest, dearest
friend,

There 's something in your eyes, your air, and that
high instep's bend,

That tells me you're of Arab race,—whatever spot of
earth,

Cheapside, or Bow, or Stepney, had the honour of your
birth,

The East it is your country ! Like an infant changed
at nurse

By fairies, you have undergone a nurtureship perverse ;
But this—these desert sands—these palms, and cedars
waving wild,

All, all, adopt thee as their own—an oriental child—

The cloud may hide the sun awhile—but soon or late,
no doubt,
The spirit of your ancestry will burst and sparkle out!
I read the starry characters—and lo ! 'tis written there,
Thou wert foredoom'd of sons of men to ride upon this
Mare,
A Mare till now was never back'd by one of mortal
mould,
Hark, how she neighs, as if for thee she knew that she
was foal'd !'

And truly—I devoutly wish'd a blast of the simoom
Had stifled her !—the Mare herself appear'd to mock
my doom ;
With many a bound she caper'd round and round me
like a dance,
I feared indeed some wild caress would end the fearful
prance,
And felt myself, and saw myself—the phantasy was
horrid !—
Like old Redgauntlet, with a shoe imprinted on my
forehead !
On bended knees, with bowing head, and hands up-
rais'd in pray'r,
I begg'd the turban'd Sultanness the issue to forbear ;
I painted weeping orphan babes, around a widow'd
wife,
And drew my death as vividly as others draw from life.
' Behold,' I said, ' a simple man, for such high feats
unfit,
Who never yet has learn'd to know the crupper from
the bit,
Whereas the boldest horsemanship, and first esquestrian
skill,
Would well be task'd to bend so wild a creature to the
will.'
Alas ! alas ! 'twas all in vain, to supplicate and kneel,
The quadruped could not have been more cold to my
appeal !

'Fear nothing,' said the smiling Fate, 'when human help is vain,
Spirits shall by thy stirrups fly, and fairies guide the rein ;

Just glance at yonder animal, her perfect shape remark,
And in thy breast at once shall glow the oriental spark !
As for thy spouse and tender babes, no Arab roams the wild

But for a mare of such descent, would barter wife and child.'

'Nay then,' cried I—(heav'n shrive the lie !) 'to tell the secret truth,

'Twas my unhappy fortune once to over-ride a youth !
A playful child,—so full of life !—a little fair-haired boy,
His sister's pet, his father's hope, his mother's darling joy !

Ah me ! the frantic shriek she gave ! I hear it ringing now !

That hour, upon the bloody spot, I made a holy vow ;
A solemn compact, deeply sworn, to witness my remorse,

That never more these limbs of mine should mount on living horse !'

Good heav'n ! to see the angry glance that flashed upon me now !

A chill ran all my marrow through—the drops were on my brow !

I knew my doom, and stole a glance at that accursed Mare,

And there she stood, with nostrils wide, that snuff'd the sultry air.

How lion-like she lash'd her flanks with her abundant tail ;

While on her neck the stormy mane kept tossing to the gale !

How fearfully she roll'd her eyes between the earth and sky,

As if in wild uncertainty to gallop or to fly !

While with her hoof she scoop'd the sand as if before
she gave
My plunge into eternity she meant to dig my grave !

And I, that ne'er could calmly bear a horse's ears at
play,
Or hear without a yard of jump his shrill and sudden
neigh—

Whose foot within a stable door had never stood an
inch—

Whose hand to pat a living steed would feel an awful
flinch,—

I that had never thrown a leg across a pony small,
To scour the pathless desert on the tallest of the tall !
For oh ! it is no fable, but at ev'ry look I cast
Her restless legs seem'd twice as long as when I saw
them last !

In agony I shook,—and yet, although congealed by
fears,

My blood was boiling fast, to judge from noises in my
ears ;

I gasp'd as if in vacuo, and thrilling with despair,
Some secret Demon seem'd to pass his fingers through
my hair.

I could not stir—I could not speak—I could not even
see—

A sudden mist rose up between that awful Mare and
me,—

I tried to pray, but found no words—tho' ready ripe
to weep,

No tear would flow,—o'er ev'ry sense a swoon began
to creep,—

When lo ! to bring my horrid fate at once unto the
brunt,

Two Arabs seized me from behind, two others in the
front,

And ere a muscle could be strung to try the strife for-
lorn,

I found myself, Mazeppa-like, upon the Desert-Born !

Terrific was the neigh she gave, the moment that my weight

Was felt upon her back, as if exulting in her freight ;
Whilst dolefully I heard a voice that set each nerve ajar,—

‘ Off with the bridle—quick !—and leave his guidance to his star ! ’

‘ Allah ! il Allah ! ’ rose the shout,—and starting with a bound,

The dreadful Creature cleared at once a dozen yards of ground ;

And grasping at her mane with both my cold convulsive hands,

Away we flew—away ! away ! across the shifting sands !

My eyes were closed in utter dread of such a fearful race,
But yet by certain signs I knew we went no earthly pace,
For turn whichever way we might, the wind with equal force

Rush’d like a torrid hurricane still adverse to our course—

One moment close at hand I heard the roaring Syrian Sea,

The next it only murmur’d like the humming of a bee !
And when I dared at last to glance across the wild immense,

Oh ne’er shall I forget the whirl that met the dizzy sense !

What seem’d a little sprig of fern, ere lips could reckon twain,

A palm of forty cubits high, we passed it on the plain !
What tongue could tell,—what pencil paint,—what pen describe the ride ?

Now off—now on—now up—now down,—and flung from side to side !

I tried to speak, but had no voice, to soothe her with its tone—

My scanty breath was jolted out with many a sudden groan—

My joints were racked—my back was strained, so firmly
I had clung—
My nostrils gush'd, and thrice my teeth had bitten
through my tongue—
When lo !—farewell all hope of life !—she turn'd and
faced the rocks,
None but a flying horse could clear those monstrous
granite blocks !
So thought I,—but I little knew the desert pride and
fire,
Deriv'd from a most deer-like dam, and lion-hearted
sire ;
Little I guess'd the energy of muscle, blood, and
bone,
Bound after bound, with eager springs, she clear'd each
massive stone ;—
Nine mortal leaps were pass'd before a huge grey rock
at length
Stood planted there as if to dare her utmost pitch of
strength—
My time was come ! that granite heap my monument
of death !
She paused, she snorted loud and long, and drew a fuller
breath ;
Nine strides and then a louder beat that warn'd me of
her spring,
I felt her rising in the air like eagle on the wing—
But oh ! the crash !—the hideous shock !—the million
sparks around !
Her hindmost hoofs had struck the crest of that pro-
digious mound !
Wild shriek'd the headlong Desert-Born—or else 'twas
demon's mirth,
One second more, and Man and Mare roll'd breathless
on the earth !

* * * * *

How long it was I cannot tell ere I revived to sense,
And then but to endure the pangs of agony intense ;

For over me lay powerless, and still as any stone,
The Corse that erst had so much fire, strength, spirit,
of its own.

My heart was still—my pulses stopp'd—midway 'twixt
life and death,

With pain unspeakable I fetch'd the fragment of a
breath,

Not vital air enough to frame one short and feeble sigh,
Yet even that I loath'd because it would not let me
die.

Oh ! slowly, slowly, slowly on, from starry night till
morn,

Time flapp'd along, with leaden wings, across that
waste forlorn !

I cursed the hour that brought me first within this
world of strife—

A sore and heavy sin it is to scorn the gift of life—

But who hath felt a horse's weight oppress his labouring
breast ?

Why any who has had, like me, the NIGHT MARE on
his chest.

THE IRISH SCHOOLMASTER

ALACK ! 'tis melancholy theme to think
How Learning doth in rugged states abide,
And, like her bashful owl, obscurely blink,
In pensive glooms and corners, scarcely spied ;
Not, as in Founders' Halls and domes of pride,
Served with grave homage, like a tragic queen,
But with one lonely priest compell'd to hide,
In midst of foggy moors and mosses green,
In that clay cabin hight the College of Kilreen !

This College looketh South and West alsoe,
Because it hath a cast in windows twain ;
Crazy and crack'd they be, and wind doth blow
Thorough transparent holes in every pane,

Which Dan, with many paines, makes whole again
With nether garments, which his thrift doth teach,
To stand for glass, like pronouns, and when rain
Stormeth, he puts, 'once more unto the breach,'
Outside and in, tho' broke, yet so he mendeth each.

And in the midst a little door there is,
Whereon a board that doth congratulate
With painted letters, red as blood I wis,
Thus written,

'CHILDREN TAKEN IN TO BATE':

And oft, indeed, the inward of that gate,
Most ventriloque, doth utter tender squeak,
And moans of infants that bemoan their fate,
In midst of sounds of Latin, French, and Greek,
Which, all i' the Irish tongue, he teacheth them to speak.

For some are meant to right illegal wrongs,
And some for Doctors of Divinitie,
Whom he doth teach to murder the dead tongues,
And so win academical degree;
But some are bred for service of the sea,
Howbeit, their store of learning is but small.
For mickle waste he counteth it would be
To stock a head with bookish wares at all,
Only to be knocked off by ruthless cannon ball.

Six babes he sways,—some little and some big,
Divided into classes six;—alsoe,
He keeps a parlour boarder of a pig,
That in the College fareth to and fro,
And picketh up the urchins' crumbs below,—
And eke the learned rudiments they scan,
And thus his A, B, C, doth wisely know,—
Hereafter to be shown in caravan,
And raise the wonderment of many a learned man.

Alsoe, he schools some tame familiar fowls,
Whereof, above his head, some two or three
Sit darkly squatting, like Minerva's owls,
But on the branches of no living tree,

And overlook the learned family ;
While, sometimes, Partlet, from her gloomy perch,
Drops feather on the nose of Dominie,
Meanwhile, with serious eye, he makes research
In leaves of that sour tree of knowledge—now a birch.

No chair he hath, the awful Pedagogue,
Such as would magisterial hams imbed,
But sitteth lowly on a beechen log,
Secure in high authority and dread :
Large, as a dome for learning, seems his head,
And like Apollo's, all beset with rays,
Because his locks are so unkempt and red,
And stand abroad in many several ways :—
No laurel crown he wears, howbeit his cap is baise.

And, underneath, a pair of shaggy brows
O'erhang as many eyes of gizzard hue,
That inward giblet of a fowl, which shows
A mongrel tint, that is ne brown ne blue ;
His nose,—it is a coral to the view ;
Well nourished with Pierian Potheen,—
For much he loves his native mountain dew ;—
But to depict the dye would lack, I ween,
A bottle-red, in terms, as well as bottle-green.

As for his coat, 'tis such a jerkin short
As Spencer had, ere he composed his Tales ;
But underneath he hath no vest, nor aught,
So that the wind his airy breast assails ;
Below, he wears the nether garb of males,
Of crimson-plush, but non-plushed at the knee ;—
Thence further down the native red prevails,
Of his own naked fleecy hosiery :—
Two sandals, without soles, complete his cap-a-pee.

Nathless, for dignity, he now doth lap
His function in a magisterial gown,
That shows more countries in it than a map,—
Blue tinct, and red, and green, and russet brown,

Besides some blots, standing for country-town ;
And eke some rents, for streams and rivers wide ;
But, sometimes, bashful when he looks adown,
He turns the garment of the other side,
Hopeful that so the holes may never be espied !

And soe he sits, amidst the little pack,
That look for shady or for sunny noon,
Within his visage, like an almanack,—
His quiet smile foretelling gracious boon :
But when his mouth droops down, like rainy moon,
With horrid chill each little heart unwarms,
Knowing that infant show'rs will follow soon,
And with forebodings of near wrath and storms
They sit, like timid hares, all trembling on their forms.

Ah ! luckless wight, who cannot then repeat
'Corduroy Colloquy,'—or 'Ki, Kæ, Kod,'—
Full soon his tears shall make his turfy seat
More sodden, tho' already made of sod,
For Dan shall whip him with the word of God,—
Severe by rule, and not by nature mild,
He never spoils the child and spares the rod,
But spoils the rod and never spares the child,
And soe with holy rule deems he is reconcil'd.

But, surely, the just sky will never wink
At men who take delight in childish throc,
And stripe the nether-urchin like a pink
Or tender hyacinth, inscribed with woe ;
Such bloody Pedagogues, when they shall know,
By useless birches, that forlorn recess,
Which is no holiday, in Pit below,
Will hell not seem designed for their distress,—
A melancholy place, that is all bottomlesse ?

Yet would the Muse not chide the wholesome use
Of needful discipline, in due degree.
Devoid of sway, what wrongs will time produce,
Whene'er the twig untrained grows up a tree.

This shall a Carder, that a Whiteboy be,
Ferocious leaders of atrocious bands,
And Learning's help be used for infamie,
By lawless clerks, that, with their bloody hands,
In murder'd English write Rock's murderous commands.

But ah ! what shrilly cry doth now alarm
The sooty fowls that dozed upon the beam,
All sudden fluttering from the brandish'd arm,
And cackling chorus with the human scream ;
Meanwhile, the scourge plies that unkindly seam,
In Phelim's brogues, which bears his naked skin,
Like traitor cap in warlike fort, I deem,
That falsely lets the fierce besieger in,
Nor seeks the Pedagogue by other course to win.

No parent dear he hath to heed his cries ;—
Alas ! his parent dear is far aloof,
And deep his Seven-Dial cellar lies,
Killed by kind cudgel-play, or gin of proof ;
Or climbeth, catwise, on some London roof,
Singing, perchance, a lay of Erin's isle,
Or, whilst he labours, weaves a fancy-woof,
Dreaming he sees his home,—his Phelim smile ;
Ah me ! that luckless imp, who weepeth all the while !

Ah ! who can paint that hard and heavy time,
When first the scholar lists in learning's train,
And mounts her rugged steep, enforc'd to climb,
Like sooty imp, by sharp posterior pain,
From bloody twig, and eke that Indian cane,
Wherein, alas ! no sugar'd juices dwell,
For this, the while one stripling's sluices drain
Another weepeth over chilblains fell,
Always upon the heel, yet never to be well !

Anon a third, for his delicious root,
Late ravish'd from his tooth by elder chit,
So soon is human violence afoot,
So hardly is the harmless biter bit !

Meanwhile, the tyrant, with untimely wit
And mouthing face, derides the small one's moan,
Who, all lamenting for his loss, doth sit,
Alack,—mischance comes seldom times alone,
But aye the worried dog must rue more curs than one.

For lo! the Pedagogue, with sudden drub,
Smites his scald head, that is already sore,—
Superfluous wound,—such is Misfortune's rub!
Who straight makes answer with redoubled roar,
And sheds salt tears twice faster than before,
That still, with backward fist he strives to dry;
Washing, with brackish moisture, o'er and o'er,
His muddy cheek, that grows more foul thereby
Till all his rainy face looks grim as rainy sky.

So Dan, by dint of noise, obtains a peace,
And with his natural untender knack,
By new distress, bids former grievance cease,
Like tears dried up with rugged huckaback,
That sets the mournful visage all awrack;
Yet soon the childish countenance will shine
Even as thorough storms the soonest slack,
For grief and beef in adverse ways incline,
This keeps, and that decays, when duly soak'd in brine.

Now all is hushed, and, with a look profound,
The Dominie lays ope the learned page;
(So be it called) although he doth expound
Without a book, both Greek and Latin sage;
Now telleth he of Rome's rude infant age,
How Romulus was bred in savage wood,
By wet-nurse wolf, devoid of wolfish rage;
And laid foundation-stone of walls of mud,
But watered it, alas! with warm fraternal blood.

Anon, he turns to that Homeric war,
How Troy was sieged like Londonderry town;
And stout Achilles, at his jaunting-car,
Dragged mighty Hector with a bloody crown:

And eke the bard, that sung of their renown,
In garb of Greece most beggar-like and torn,
He paints, with colly, wand'ring up and down :
Because, at once, in seven cities born ;
And so, of parish rights, was, all his days, forlorn

Anon, through old Mythology he goes,
Of gods defunct, and all their pedigrees,
But shuns their scandalous amours, and shows
How Plato wise, and clear-ey'd Socrates,
Confess'd not to those heathen hes and shes ;
But thro' the clouds of the Olympic cope
Beheld St. Peter, with his holy keys,
And own'd their love was naught, and bow'd to Pope,
Whilst all their purblind race in Pagan mist did grope.

From such quaint themes he turns, at last, aside,
To new philosophies, that still are green,
And shows what rail-roads have been track'd to guide
The wheels of great political machine ;
If English corn should grow abroad, I ween,
And gold be made of gold, or paper sheet ;
How many pigs be born to each spalpeen ;
And, ah ! how man shall thrive beyond his meat,—
With twenty souls alive, to one square sod of peat !

Here, he makes end ; and all the fry of youth,
That stood around with serious look intense,
Close up again their gaping eyes and mouth,
Which they had opened to his eloquence,
As if their hearing were a threefold sense ;
But now the current of his words is done,
And whether any fruits shall spring from thence,
In future time, with any mother's son,
It is a thing, God wot ! that can be told by none.

Now by the creeping shadows of the noon,
The hour is come to lay aside their lore ;
The cheerful pedagogue perceives it soon,
And cries, ' Begone ! ' unto the imps,—and four

Snatch their two hats, and struggle for the door,
Like ardent spirits vented from a cask,
All blythe and boisterous,—but leave two more,
With Reading made Uneasy for a task,
To weep, whilst all their mates in merry sunshine bask,

Like sportive Elfin, on the verdant sod,
With tender moss so sleekly overgrown,
'That doth not hurt, but kiss, the sole unshod,
So soothly kind is Erin to her own!
And one, at Hare and Hound, plays all alone,—
For Phelim's gone to tend his step-dame's cow;
Ah! Phelim's step-dame is a canker'd crone!
Whilst other twain play at an Irish row,
And, with shillelah small, break one another's brow!

But careful Dominie, with ceaseless thrift,
Now changeth ferula for rural hoe;
But, first of all, with tender hand doth shift
His college gown, because of solar glow,
And hangs it on a bush, to scare the crow:
Meanwhile, he plants in earth the dappled bean,
Or trains the young potatoes all a-row,
Or plucks the fragrant leek for pottage green,
With that crisp curly herb, call'd Kale in Aberdeen.

And so he wisely spends the fruitful hours,
Linked each to each by labour, like a bee;
Or rules in Learning's hall, or trims her bow'rs;
Would there were many more such wights as he,
To sway each capital academie
Of Cam and Isis, for, alack! at each
There dwells, I wot, some dronish Dominie,
That does no garden work, nor yet doth teach,
But wears a floury head, and talks in flow'ry speech!

SONG

O LADY, leave thy silken thread
 And flowery tapestry,
 There's living roses on the bush,
 And blossoms on the tree ;
 Stoop where thou wilt, thy careless hand
 Some random bud will meet ;
 Thou canst not tread but thou wilt find
 The daisy at thy feet.

'Tis like the birthday of the world,
 When earth was born in bloom ;
 The light is made of many dyes,
 The air is all perfume ;
 There's crimson buds, and white and blue—
 The very rainbow show'rs
 Have turn'd to blossoms where they fell,
 And sown the earth with flow'rs.

There's fairy tulips in the East,
 The garden of the sun ;
 The very streams reflect the hues,
 And blossom as they run :
 While morn opes like a crimson rose,
 Still wet with pearly showers ;
 Then, lady, leave the silken thread
 Thou twinest into flow'rs !

THE TWO SWANS

A FAIRY TALE

IMMORTAL Imogen, crown'd queen above
 The lilies of thy sex, vouchsafe to hear
 A fairy dream in honour of true love—
 True above ills, and frailty, and all fear—
 Perchance a shadow of his own career
 Whose youth was darkly prison'd and long twin'd
 By serpent-sorrow, till white Love drew near,
 And sweetly sang him free, and round his mind
 A bright horizon threw, wherein no grief may wind.

I saw a tower builded on a lake,
Mock'd by its inverse shadow, dark and deep—
That seem'd a still intenser night to make,
Wherein the quiet waters sunk to sleep,—
And, whatsoe'er was prison'd in that keep,
A monstrous Snake was warden :—round and round
In sable ringlets I beheld him creep
Blackest amid black shadows, to the ground,
Whilst his enormous head the topmost turret crown'd.

From whence he shot fierce light against the stars,
Making the pale moon paler with affright ;
And with his ruby eye out-threaten'd Mars—
That blazed in the mid-heavens, hot and bright—
Nor slept, nor wink'd, but with a steadfast spite
Watch'd their wan looks and tremblings in the skies ;
And that he might not slumber in the night,
The curtain-lids were pluck'd from his large eyes,
So he might never drowze, but watch his secret prize.

Prince or princess in dismal durance pent,
Victims of old Enchantment's love or hate,
Their lives must all in painful sighs be spent,
Watching the lonely waters soon and late,
And clouds that pass and leave them to their fate,
Or company their grief with heavy tears :—
Meanwhile that Hope can spy no golden gate
For sweet escapement, but in darksome fears
They weep and pine away as if immortal years.

No gentle bird with gold upon its wing
Will perch upon the grate—the gentle bird
Is safe in leafy dell, and will not bring
Freedom's sweet key-note and commission-word
Learn'd of a fairy's lips, for pity stirr'd—
Lest while he trembling sings, untimely guest !
Watch'd by that cruel snake and darkly heard,
He leave a widow on her lonely nest,
To press in silent grief the darlings of her breast.

No gallant knight, adventurous, in his bark,
Will seek the fruitful perils of the place,
To rouse with dipping oar the waters dark
That bear that serpent-image on their face.
And Love, brave Love ! though he attempt the base,
Nerved to his loyal death, he may not win
His captive lady from the strict embrace
Of that foul serpent, clasping her within
His sable folds—like Eve enthralld by the old Sin.

But there is none—no knight in panoply,
Nor Love, intrench'd in his strong steely coat :
No little speck—no sail—no helper nigh,
No sign—no whispering—no splash of boat :—
The distant shores show dimly and remote,
Made of a deeper mist,—serene and grey,—
And slow and mute the cloudy shadows float
Over the gloomy wave, and pass away,
Chased by the silver beams that on their margins play.

And bright and silvery the willows sleep
Over the shady verge—no mad winds tease
Their hoary heads ; but quietly they weep
Their sprinkling leaves—half fountains and half
trees :
There lilies be—and fairer than all these,
A solitary Swan her breast of snow
Launches against the wave that seems to freeze
Into a chaste reflection, still below,
Twin-shadow of herself wherever she may go.

And forth she paddles in the very noon
Of solemn midnight, like an elfin thing
Charm'd into being by the argent moon—
Whose silver light for love of her fair wing
Goes with her in the shade, still worshipping
Her dainty plumage :—all around her grew
A radiant circlet, like a fairy ring ;
And all behind, a tiny little clue
Of light to guide her back across the waters blue.

And sure she is no meaner than a fay,
Redeem'd from sleepy death, for beauty's sake,
By old ordainment:—silent as she lay,
Touch'd by a moonlight wand I saw her wake,
And cut her leafy slough and so forsake
The verdant prison of her lily peers,
That sleep amidst the stars upon the lake—
A breathing shape—restored to human fears,
And new-born love and grief—self-conscious of her tears.

And now she clasps her wings around her heart,
And near that lonely isle begins to glide
Pale as her fears, and oftentimes with a start
Turns her impatient head from side to side
In universal terrors—all too wide
To watch; and often to that marble keep
Upturns her pearly eyes, as if she spied
Some foe, and crouches in the shadows steep
That in the gloomy wave go diving fathoms deep.

And well she may, to spy that fearful thing
All down the dusky walls in circlets wound,
Alas! for what rare prize, with many a ring
Girding the marble casket round and round?
His folded tail, lost in the gloom profound,
Terribly darkeneth the rocky base;
But on the top his monstrous head is crown'd
With prickly spears, and on his doubtful face
Gleam his unwearied eyes, red watchers of the place,

Alas! of the hot fires that nightly fall,
No one will scorch him in those orbs of spite,
So he may never see beneath the wall
That timid little creature, all too bright,
That stretches her fair neck, slender and white,
Invoking the pale moon, and vainly tries
Her throbbing throat, as if to charm the night
With song—but, hush—it perishes in sighs,
And there will be no dirge sad-swelling though she dies!

She droops—she sinks—she leans upon the lake,
Fainting again into a lifeless flower ;
But soon the chilly springs anoint and wake
Her spirit from its death, and with new power
She sheds her stifled sorrows in a shower
Of tender song, timed to her falling tears—
That wins the shady summit of that tower,
And, trembling all the sweeter for its fears,
Fills with imploring moan that cruel monster's ears.

And, lo ! the scaly beast is all deprest,
Subdued like Argus by the might of sound—
What time Apollo his sweet lute addrest
To magic converse with the air, and bound
The many monster eyes, all slumber-drown'd :—
So on the turret-top that watchful snake
Pillows his giant head, and lists profound,
As if his wrathful spite would never wake,
Charm'd into sudden sleep for Love and Beauty's sake !

His prickly crest lies prone upon his crown,
And thirsty lip from lip disparted flies,
To drink that dainty flood of music down—
His scaly throat is big with pent-up sighs—
And whilst his hollow ear entranced lies,
His looks for envy of the charmed sense
Are fain to listen, till his steadfast eyes,
Stung into pain by their own impotence,
Distil enormous tears into the lake immense.

Oh, tuneful swan ! oh, melancholy bird !
Sweet was that midnight miracle of song,
Rich with ripe sorrow, needful of no word
To tell of pain, and love, and love's deep wrong—
Hinting a piteous tale—perchance how long
Thy unknown tears were mingled with the lake,
What time disguised thy leafy mates among—
And no eye knew what human love and ache
Dwelt in those dewy leaves, and heart so nigh to break.

Therefore no poet will ungently touch
The water-lily, on whose eyelids dew
Trembles like tears; but ever held it such
As human pain may wander through and through,
Turning the pale leaf paler in its hue—
Wherein life dwells, transfigured, not entomb'd
By magic spells. Alas! who ever knew
Sorrow in all its shapes, leafy and plumed,
Or in gross husks of brutes eternally inhumed?

And now the wingèd song has scaled the height
Of that dark dwelling, buildd for despair,
And soon a little casement flashing bright
Widens self-open'd into the cool air—
That music like a bird may enter there
And soothe the captive in his stony cage;
For there is nought of grief, or painful care,
But plaintive song may happily engage
From sense of its own ill, and tenderly assuage.

And forth into the light, small and remote,
A creature, like the fair son of a king,
Draws to the lattice in his jewell'd coat
Against the silver moonlight glistening,
And leans upon his white hand listening
To that sweet music that with tenderer tone
Salutes him, wondering what kindly thing
Is come to soothe him with so tuneful moan,
Singing beneath the walls as if for him alone!

And while he listens, the mysterious song,
Woven with timid particles of speech,
Twines into passionate words that grieve along
The melancholy notes, and softly teach
The secrets of true love,—that trembling reach
His earnest ear, and through the shadows dun
He missions like replies, and each to each
Their silver voices mingle into one,
Like blended streams that make one music as they run.

' Ah Love ! my hope is swooning in my heart,—
Ay, sweet ! my cage is strong and hung full high—
Alas ! our lips are held so far apart,
Thy words come faint,—they have so far to fly !—
If I may only shun that serpent-eye,—
Ah me ! that serpent-eye doth never sleep ;—
Then nearer thee, Love's martyr, I will die !—
Alas, alas ! that word has made me weep !
For pity's sake remain safe in thy marble keep !

' My marble keep ! it is my marble tomb !—
Nay, sweet ! but thou hast there thy living breath—
Aye to expend in sighs for this hard doom ;—
But I will come to thee and sing beneath,
And nightly so beguile this serpent wreath ;—
Nay, I will find a path from these despairs.—
Ah, needs then thou must tread the back of death,
Making his stony ribs thy stony stairs.—
Behold his ruby eye, how fearfully it glares !'

Full sudden at these words, the princely youth
Leaps on the scaly back that slumbers, still
Unconscious of his foot, yet not for ruth,
But numb'd to dulness by the fairy skill
Of that sweet music (all more wild and shrill
For intense fear) that charm'd him as he lay—
Meanwhile the lover nerves his desperate will,
Held some short throbs by natural dismay,
Then, down, down the serpent-track begins his dark-
some way.

Now dimly seen—now toiling out of sight,
Eclipsed and cover'd by the envious wall ;
Now fair and spangled in the sudden light,
And clinging with wide arms for fear of fall :
Now dark and shelter'd by a kindly pall
Of dusky shadow from his wakeful foe ;
Slowly he winds adown—dimly and small,
Watch'd by the gentle Swan that sings below,
Her hope increasing, still, the larger he doth grow.

But nine times nine the Serpent folds embrace
The marble walls about—which he must tread
Before his anxious foot may touch the base :
Long is the dreary path, and must be sped !
But Love, that holds the mastery of dread,
Braces his spirit, and with constant toil
He wins his way, and now, with arms outspread,
Impatient plunges from the last long coil :
So may all gentle Love ungentle Malice foil !

The song is hush'd, the charm is all complete,
And two fair Swans are swimming on the lake :
But scarce their tender bills have time to meet,
When fiercely drops adown that cruel Snake—
His steely scales a fearful rustling make,
Like autumn leaves that tremble and foretell
The sable storm ;—the plummy lovers quake—
And feel the troubled waters pant and swell,
Heaved by the giant bulk of their pursuer fell.

His jaws, wide yawning like the gates of Death,
Hiss horrible pursuit—his red eyes glare
The waters into blood—his eager breath
Grows hot upon their plumes :—now, minstrel fair !
She drops her ring into the waves, and there
It widens all around, a fairy ring
Wrought of the silver light—the fearful pair
Swim in the very midst, and pant and cling
The closer for their fears, and tremble wing to wing.

Bending their course over the pale grey lake,
Against the pallid East, wherein light play'd
In tender flushes, still the baffled Snake
Circled them round continually, and bay'd
Hoarsely and loud, forbidden to invade
The sanctuary ring—his sable mail
Roll'd darkly through the flood, and writhed and
made
A shining track over the waters pale,
Lash'd into boiling foam by his enormous tail.

And so they sail'd into the distance dim,
 Into the very distance—small and white,
 Like snowy blossoms of the spring that swim
 Over the brooklets—followed by the spite
 Of that huge serpent, that with wild affright
 Worried them on their course, and sore annoy,
 Till on the grassy marge I saw them 'light,
 And change, anon, a gentle girl and boy,
 Locked in embrace of sweet unutterable joy!

Then came the Morn, and with her pearly showers
 Wept on them, like a mother, in whose eyes
 Tears are no grief; and from his rosy bowers
 The Oriental sun began to rise,
 Chasing the darksome shadows from the skies;
 Wherewith that sable Serpent far away
 Fled, like a part of night—delicious sighs
 From waking blossoms purified the day,
 And little birds were singing sweetly from each spray.

ODE TO MR. GRAHAM

THE AERONAUT

'Up with me!—up with me into the sky!'—
 WORDSWORTH—*on a Lark!*

DEAR Graham, whilst the busy crowd,
 The vain, the wealthy, and the proud,
 Their meaner flights pursue,
 Let us cast off the foolish ties
 That bind us to the earth, and rise
 And take a bird's-eye view!—

A few more whiffs of my segar
 And then, in Fancy's airy car,
 Have with thee for the skies:—
 How oft this fragrant smoke upcurl'd,
 Hath borne me from this little world,
 And all that in it lies!—

Away!—away!—the bubble fills—
Farewell to earth and all its hills!—

We seem to cut the wind!—
So high we mount, so swift we go,
The chimney tops are far below,
The Eagle's left behind!—

Ah me! my brain begins to swim!—
The world is growing rather dim;

The steeples and the trees—
My wife is getting very small!
I cannot see my babe at all!—
The Dollond, if you please!

Do, Graham, let me have a quiz,
Lord! what a Lilliput it is,
That little world of Mogg's!—
Are those the London Docks?—that channel,
The mighty Thames?—a proper kennel
For that small Isle of Dogs!—

What is that seeming tea-urn there?
That fairy dome, St. Paul's!—I swear,
Wren must have been a Wren!—
And that small stripe?—it cannot be
The City Road!—Good lack! to see
The little ways of men!

Little, indeed!—my eyeballs ache
To find a turnpike.—I must take
Their tolls upon my trust!—
And where is mortal labour gone?
Look, Graham, for a little stone
Mac Adamized to dust!

Look at the horses!—less than flies!—
Oh, what a waste it was of sighs
To wish to be a Mayor!
What is the honour?—none at all,
One's honour must be very small
For such a civic chair!—

And there's Guildhall!—'tis far aloof—
Methinks, I fancy thro' the roof

Its little guardian Gogs,
Like penny dolls—a tiny show!—
Well,—I must say they're ruled below
By very little logs!—

Oh! Graham, how the upper air
Alters the standards of compare;

One of our silken flags
Would cover London all about—
Nay then—let's even empty out
Another brace of bags!

Now for a glass of bright champagne
Above the clouds!—Come, let us drain

A bumper as we go!—
But hold!—for God's sake do not cant
The cork away—unless you want
To brain your friends below.

Think! what a mob of little men
Are crawling just within our ken,

Like mites upon a cheese!—
Pshaw!—how the foolish sight rebukes
Ambitious thoughts!—can there be *Dukes*
Of *Gloster* such as these!—

Oh! what is glory?—what is fame?

Hark to the little mob's acclaim,

'Tis nothing but a hum!—
A few near gnats would trump as loud
As all the shouting of a crowd
That has so far to come!—

Well—they are wise that choose the near,
A few small buzzards in the ear,

To organs ages hence!—
Ah me, how distance touches all;
It makes the true look rather small,
But murders poor pretence.

'The world recedes—it disappears !
Heav'n opens on my eyes—my ears
With buzzing noises ring !'—
A fig for Southey's Laureat lore !—
What's Rogers here ?—Who cares for Moore
That hears the Angels sing !—

A fig for earth, and all its minions !—
We are above the world's opinions,
Graham ! we'll have our own !—
Look what a vantage height we've got—
Now—*do* you think Sir Walter Scott
Is such a Great Unknown ?

Speak up,—or hath he hid his name
To crawl thro' 'subways' unto fame,
Like Williams of Cornhill ?—
Speak up, my lad !—when men run small
We'll show what's little in them all,
Receive it how they will !—

Think now of Irving !—shall he preach
The princes down,—shall he impeach
The potent and the rich,
Merely on ethic stilts,—and I
Not moralize at two miles high—
The true didactic pitch !

Come :—what d'ye think of Jeffrey, sir ?
Is Gifford such a Gulliver
In Lilliput's Review,
That like Colossus he should stride
Certain small brazen inches wide
For poets to pass through ?

Look down ! the world is but a spot.
Now say—Is Blackwood's *low* or not,
For all the Scottish tone ?
It shall not weigh us here—not where
The sandy burden's lost in air—
Our lading—where is't flown ?

Now,—like you Croly's verse indeed—
 In heaven—where one cannot read
 The 'Warren' on a wall?
 What think you here of that man's fame?
 Tho' Jerdan magnified his name,
 To me 'tis very small!

And, truly, is there such a spell
 In those three letters, L. E. L.,
 To witch a world with song?
 On clouds the Byron did not sit,
 Yet dar'd on Shakspeare's head to spit,
 And say the world was wrong!

And shall not we? Let's think aloud!
 Thus being couch'd upon a cloud,
 Graham, we'll have our eyes!
 We felt the great when we were less,
 But we'll retort on littleness
 Now we are in the skies.

O Graham, Graham, how I blame
 The bastard blush,—the petty shame,
 That used to fret me quite,—
 The little sores I cover'd then,
 No sores on earth, nor sorrows when
 The world is out of sight!

My name is Tims.—I am the man
 That North's unseen, diminish'd clan
 So scurvily abused!
 I am the very P. A. Z.
 The London Lion's small pin's head
 So often hath refused!

Campbell—(you cannot see him here)—
 Hath scorn'd my *lays*:—do his appear
 Such great eggs from the sky?—
 And Longman, and his lengthy Co.
 Long, only, in a little Row,
 Have thrust my poems by!

What else?—I'm poor, and much beset
With damn'd small duns—that is—in debt
Some grains of golden dust!
But only worth, above, is worth.—
What's all the credit of the earth?
An inch of cloth on trust!

What's Rothschild here, that wealthy man!
Nay, worlds of wealth?—Oh, if you can
Spy out,—the *Golden Ball*!
Sure as we rose, all money sank:
What's gold or silver now?—the Bank
Is gone—the 'Change and all!

What's all the ground-rent of the globe?—
Oh, Graham, it would worry Job
To hear its landlords prate!
But after this survey, I think
I'll ne'er be bullied more, nor shrink
From men of large estate!

And less, still less, will I submit
To poor mean acres' worth of wit—
I that have heaven's span—
I that like Shakspeare's self may dream
Beyond the very clouds, and seem
An Universal Man!

Oh, Graham, mark those gorgeous crowds!
Like Birds of Paradise the clouds
Are winging on the wind!
But what is grander than their range?
More lovely than their sun-set change?—
The free creative mind!

Well! the Adults' School's in the air!
The greatest men are lesson'd there
As well as the Lessee!
Oh could Earth's Ellistons thus small
Behold the greatest stage of all,
How humbled they would be!

'Oh would some God the giftie gie 'em,
To see themselves as others see 'em,'

'Twould much abate their fuss!

If they could think that from the skies
They are as little in our eyes

As they can think of us!

Of us? are *we* gone out of sight?
Lessen'd! diminish'd! vanish'd quite!

Lost to the tiny town!

Beyond the Eagle's ken—the grope
Of Dollond's longest telescope!

Graham! we're going down!

Ah me! I've touch'd a string that opes
The airy valve!—the gas elopes—

Down goes our bright Balloon!—

Farewell the skies! the clouds! I smell
The lower world! Graham, farewell,

Man of the silken moon!

The earth is close! the City nears—
Like a burnt paper it appears,

Studded with tiny sparks!

Methinks I hear the distant rout
Of coaches rumbling all about—

We're close above the Parks!

I hear the watchmen on their beats,
Hawking the hour about the streets.

Lord! what a cruel jar

It is upon the earth to light!

Well—there's the finish of our flight!

I've smoked my last segar!

A FRIENDLY ADDRESS

TO MRS. FRY IN NEWGATE

‘Sermon in stones.’—*As You Like It*.‘Out! out! damned spot.’—*Macbeth*.

I LIKE you, Mrs. Fry! I like your name!

It speaks the very warmth you feel in pressing
In daily act round Charity’s great flame—I like the crisp Browne way you have of dressing,
Good Mrs. Fry! I like the placid claimYou make to Christianity,—professing
Love, and good *works*—of course you buy of Barton,
Beside the young *fry*’s bookseller, Friend Darton!

I like, good Mrs. Fry, your brethren mute—

Those serious, solemn gentlemen that sport—

I should have said, that *wear*, the sober suit

Shap’d like a court dress—but for heaven’s court.

I like your sisters too,—sweet Rachel’s fruit—

Protestant nuns! I like their stiff support

Of virtue—and I like to see them clad

With such a difference—just like good from bad!

I like the sober colours—not the wet;

Those gaudy manufactures of the rainbow—

Green, orange, crimson, purple, violet—

In which the fair, the flirting, and the vain, go—

The others are a chaste, severer set,

In which the good, the pious, and the plain, go—

They’re moral *standards*, to know Christians by—In short, they are your *colours*, Mrs. Fry!

As for the naughty tinges of the prism—

Crimson’s the cruel uniform of war—

Blue—hue of brimstone! minds no catechism;

And green is young and gay—not noted for

Goodness, or gravity, or quietism,

Till it is sadden’d down to tea-green, or

Olive—and purple’s giv’n to wine, I guess;

And yellow is a convict by its dress!

They're all the devil's liveries, that men
 And women wear in servitude to sin—
 But how will they come off, poor motleys, when
 Sin's wages are paid down, and they stand in
 The Evil presence? You and I know, then
 How all the party colours will begin,
 To part—the *Pittite* hues will sadden there,
 Whereas the *Foxite* shades will all show fair!

Witness their goodly labours one by one!
Russet makes garments for the needy poor—
Dove-colour preaches love to all—and *dun*
 Calls every day at Charity's street-door—
Brown studies scripture, and bids woman shun
 All gaudy furnishing—*olive* doth pour
 Oil into wounds: and *drab* and *slate* supply
 Scholar and book in Newgate, Mrs. Fry!

Well! Heaven forbid that I should discommend
 The gratis, charitable, jail-endavour!
 When all persuasions in your praises blend—
 The Methodist's creed and cry are, *Fry* for ever!
 No—I will be your friend—and, like a friend,
 Point out your very worst defect—Nay, never
 Start at that word!—But I *must* ask you why
 You keep your school *in* Newgate, Mrs. Fry?

Too well I know the price our mother Eve
 Paid for *her* schooling: but must all her daughters
 Commit a petty larceny, and thief—
 Pay down a crime for '*entrance*' to your '*quarters*'?
 Your classes may increase, but I must grieve
 Over your pupils at their bread and waters!
 Oh, tho' it cost you rent—(and rooms run high!)
 Keep your school *out* of Newgate, Mrs. Fry!

O save the vulgar soul before it's spoil'd!
 Set up your mounted sign *without* the gate—
 And there inform the mind before 'tis soil'd!
 'Tis sorry writing on a greasy slate!

Nay, if you would not have your labours foil'd,
 Take it *inclining* tow'rd's a virtuous state,
 Not prostrate and laid flat—else, woman meek!
 The *upright* pencil will but hop and shriek!

Ah, who can tell how hard it is to drain
 The evil spirit from the heart it preys in,—
 To bring sobriety to life again,
 Chok'd with the vile Anacreontic raisin,—
 To wash Black Betty when her black's ingrain,—
 To stick a moral lacquer on Moll Brazen,
 Of Suky Tawdry's habits to deprive her;
 To tame the wild-fowl-ways of Jenny Diver!

Ah, who can tell how hard it is to teach
 Miss Nancy Dawson on her bed of straw—
 To make Long Sal sew up the endless breach
 She made in manners—to write heaven's own law
 On hearts of granite.—Nay, how hard to preach,
 In cells, that are not memory's—to draw
 The moral thread, thro' the immoral eye
 Of blunt Whitechapel natures, Mrs. Fry!

In vain you teach them baby-work within:
 'Tis but a clumsy botchery of crime;
 'Tis but a tedious darning of old sin—
 Come out yourself, and stitch up souls in time—
 It is too late for scouring to begin
 When virtue's ravell'd out, when all the prime
 Is worn away, and nothing sound remains;
 You'll fret the fabric out before the stains!

I like your chocolate, good Mistress Fry!
 I like your cookery in every way;
 I like your shrove-tide service and supply;
 I like to hear your sweet *Pandeans* play;
 I like the pity in your full-brimm'd eye;
 I like your carriage and your silken grey,
 Your dove-like habits, and your silent preaching;
 But I don't like your Newgatory teaching.

Come out of Newgate, Mrs. Fry! Repair
 Abroad, and find your pupils in the streets.
 O, come abroad into the wholesome air,
 And take your moral place, before Sin seats
 Her wicked self in the Professor's chair.

Suppose some morals raw! the true receipt's
 To dress them in the pan, but do not try
 To cook them in the fire, good Mrs. Fry!

Put on your decent bonnet, and come out!

Good lack! the ancients did not set up schools
 In jail—but at the *Porch*! hinting, no doubt,
 That Vice should have a lesson in the rules
 Before 'twas whipt by law.—O come about,

Good Mrs. Fry! and set up forms and stools
 All down the Old Bailey, and thro' Newgate-street,
 But not in Mr. Wontner's proper seat!

Teach Lady Barrymore, if, teaching, you
 That peerless Peeress can absolve from dolour;
 Teach her it is not virtue to pursue

Ruin of blue, or any other colour;
 Teach her it is not Virtue's crown to rue,

Month after month, the unpaid drunken dollar;
 Teach her that 'flooring Charleys' is a game
 Unworthy one that bears a Christian name.

O come and teach our children—that ar'n't *ours*—

That heaven's straight pathway is a narrow way,
 Not Broad St. Giles's, where fierce Sin devours

Children, like Time—or rather they both prey
 On youth together—meanwhile Newgate low'rs

Ev'n like a black cloud at the close of day,
 To shut them out from any more blue sky:
 Think of these hopeless wretches, Mrs. Fry!

You are not nice—go into their retreats,

And make them Quakers, if you will.—'Twere best
 They wore straight collars, and their shirts sans *pleats*;
 That they had hats *with* brims,—that they were drest

In garbs without *lappels*—than shame the streets
 With so much raggedness.—You may invest
 Much cash this way—but it will cost its price,
 To give a good, round, real *cheque* to Vice!

In brief,—Oh teach the child its moral rote,
 Not *in* the way from which it won't depart,—
 But *out*—out—out! Oh, bid it walk remote!
 And if the skies are clos'd against the smart,
 Ev'n let him wear the single-breasted coat,
 For that ensureth singleness of heart.—
 Do what you will, his every want supply,
 Keep him—but *out* of Newgate, Mrs. Fry!

AN ADDRESS TO THE STEAM WASHING COMPANY

'Archer. How many are there, *Scrub*?

Scrub. Five and forty, Sir.'—*Beaux Stratagem*.

'For shame—let the linen alone.'—*M. W. of Windsor*.

MR. SCRUB—Mr. Slop—or whoever you be!
 The Cock of Steam Laundries,—the head Patentee
 Of Associate Cleansers,—Chief founder and prime
 Of the firm for the wholesale distilling of grime—
 Co-partners and dealers, in linen's propriety—
 That make washing public—and wash in society—
 O lend me your ear! if that ear can forego,
 For a moment, the music that bubbles below,—
 From your new Surrey Geisers¹ all foaming and hot,—
 That soft '*simmer's* sang' so endear'd to the Scot—
 If your hands may stand still, or your steam without
 danger—

If your suds will not cool, and a mere simple stranger,
 Both to you and to washing, may put in a rub,—
 O wipe out your Amazon arms from the tub,—
 And lend me your ear,—Let me modestly plead
 For a race that your labours may soon supersede—

¹ Geisers :—the boiling springs in Iceland.

For a race that, now washing no living affords—
Like Grimaldi must leave their aquatic old boards,
Not with pence in their pocket to keep them at ease,
Not with bread in the funds—or investments of cheese,—
But to droop like sad willows that liv'd by a stream,
Which the sun has suck'd up into vapour and steam.
Ah, look at the laundress, before you begrudge
Her hard daily bread to that laudable drudge—
When chanticler singeth his earliest matins,
She slips her amphibious feet in her pattens,
And beginneth her toil while the morn is still grey,
As if she was washing the night into day—
Not with sleeker or rosier fingers Aurora
Beginneth to scatter the dew-drops before her;
Not Venus that rose from the billow so early,
Look'd down on the foam with a forehead more
pearly—

Her head is involv'd in an aerial mist,
And a bright-beaded bracelet encircles her wrist;
Her visage glows warm with the ardour of duty;
She's Industry's moral—she's all moral beauty!
Growing brighter and brighter at every rub—
Would any man ruin her?—No, Mr. Scrub!
No man that is manly would work her mishap—
No man that is manly would covet her cap—
Nor her apron—her hose—nor her gown made of stuff—
Nor her gin—nor her tea—nor her wet pinch of snuff!
Alas! so *she* thought—but that slippery hope
Has betrayed her—as tho' she had trod on her soap!
And she,—whose support,—like the fishes that fly,
Was to have her fins wet, must now drop from her sky—
She whose living it was, and a part of her fare,
To be damp'd once a day, like the great white sea bear,
With her hands like a sponge, and her head like a mop—
Quite a living absorbent that revell'd in slop—
She that paddled in water, must walk upon sand,
And sigh for her deeps like a turtle on land!

Lo, then, the poor laundress, all wretched she stands,
Instead of a counterpane wringing her hands!

All haggard and pinch'd, going down in life's vale,
With no faggot for burning, like Allan-a-dale!
No smoke from her flue—and no steam from her
pane,

Where once she watch'd heaven, fearing God and the
rain—

Or gaz'd o'er her bleach-field so fairly engross'd,
'Till the lines wander'd idle from pillar to post!

Ah, where are the playful young pinners—ah, where
The harlequin quilts that cut capers in air—

The brisk waltzing stockings—the white and the black,
That danc'd on the tight-rope, or swung on the slack—

The light sylph-like garments so tenderly pinn'd,
That blew into shape, and embodied the wind!

There was white on the grass—there was white on the
spray—

Her garden—it look'd like a garden of May!

But now all is dark—not a shirt's on a shrub—

You've ruin'd her prospects in life, Mr. Scrub!

You've ruin'd her custom—now families drop her—

From her silver reduc'd—nay, reduc'd from her *copper*!

The last of her washing is done at her eye,

One poor little kerchief that never gets dry!

From mere lack of linen she can't lay a cloth,

And boils neither barley nor alkaline broth—

But her children come round her as victuals grow scant,

And recal, with foul faces, the source of their want—

When she thinks of their poor little mouths to be fed,

And then thinks of her trade that is utterly dead,

And even its pearlashes laid in the grave—

Whilst her tub is a dry rotting, stave after stave,

And the greatest of Coopers, ev'n he that they dub

Sir Astley, can't bind up her heart or her tub,—

Need you wonder she curses your bones, Mr. Scrub?

Need you wonder, when steam has depriv'd her of bread,

If she prays that the evil may visit *your* head—

Nay, scald all the heads of your Washing Committee,—

If she wishes you all the soot blacks of the city—

In short, not to mention all plagues without number,

If she wishes you all in the *Wash* at the Humber!

Ah, perhaps, in some moment of drouth and despair,
 When her linen got scarce, and her washing grew rare—
 When the sum of her suds might be summ'd in a bowl,
 And the rusty cold iron quite enter'd her soul—
 When, perhaps, the last glance of her wandering eye
 Had caught 'the Cock Laundresses' Coach' going by,
 Or her lines that hung idle, to waste the fine weather,
 And she thought of her wrongs and her rights both
 together,

In a lather of passion that froth'd as it rose,
 Too angry for grammar, too lofty for prose,
 On her sheet—if a sheet were still left her—to write,
 Some remonstrance like this then, perchance, saw the
 light—

LETTER OF REMONSTRANCE FROM BRIDGET JONES

TO THE NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMAN FORMING
 THE WASHING COMMITTEE

It's a shame, so it is—men can't Let alone
 Jobs as is Woman's right to do—and go about there
 Own—

Theirs Reforms enuff Alreddy without your new schools
 For washing to sit Up—and push the Old Tubs from
 their stools !

But your just like the Raddicals,—for upsetting of the
 Suds

When the world wagged well enuff—and Wommen
 washed your old dirty duds,

I'm Certain sure Enuff your Ann Sisters had no stream
 Ingins, that's Flat,—

But I Warrant your Four Fathers went as Tidy and
 gentlemanny for all that—

I suppose your the Family as lived in the Great Kittle
 I see on Clapham Commun, some times a very consider-
 able period back when I were little,

And they Said it went with Steem,—But that was a
joke !
For I never see none come of it,—that 's out of it—but
only sum Smoak—
And for All your Power of Horses about your Ingins
you never had but Two
In my time to draw you About to Fairs—and curse
you, you know that 's true !
And for All your fine Perspectuses—howsomever you
bewhich 'em,
Theirs as Pretty ones off Primerows Hill, as ever a one
at Mitchum,
Thof I cant sea What Prospectives and washing has
with one another to Do—
It aant as if a Bird'seye Hankicher can take a Birdshigh
view !
But Thats your look out—I've not much to do with
that—But pleas God to hold up fine,
Id show you caps and pinneres and small things as lilli-
whit as Ever crosst the Line,
Without going any Father off then Little Parodies
Place,
And Thats more than you Can—and Ill say it behind
your face—
But when Folks talks of washing, it ant for you too
Speak—
As kept Dockter Pattyson out of his Shirt for a
Weak !
Thinks I, when I heard it—Well, thear 's a Pretty
go !
That comes o' not marking of things or washing out the
marks, and Huddling em' up so !
Till Their friends comes and owns them, like drownded
corpeses in a Vault,
But may Hap you havint Larn'd to spel—and That
ant your Fault,
Only you ought to leafe the Linnins to them as has
Larn'd,—
For if it warnt for Washing,—and whare Bills is con-
cern'd

What's the Yuse, of all the world, for a Wommans
 Edication,
 And Their Being maid Schollards of Sundays—fit for
 any Cityation.

Well, what I says is This—when every Kittle has
 its spout,
 Theirs no need for Companys to puff steam about !
 To be sure its very Well, when Their ant enuff Wind
 For blowing up Boats with,—but not to hurt human
 kind
 Like that Pearkins with his Blunderbush, that's loaded
 with hot water,
 Thof a Sherrif might know Better, than make things
 for slaughtter,
 As if War warnt Cruel enuff—wherever it befalls,
 Without shooting poor sogers, with sich scalding hot
 washing balls,—
 But thats not so Bad as a Sett of Bear Faced Scrubbs
 As joins their Sopes together, and sits up Stream
 rubbing Clubs,
 For washing Dirt Cheap,—and eating other Peple's
 grubbs !
 Which is all verry Fine for you and your Patent Tea,
 But I wonders How Poor Wommen is to get Their
 Bo He !
 They must drink Hunt wash (the only wash God nose
 there will be !)
 And their Little drop of Somethings as they takes for
 their Goods,
 When you and your Steam has ruined (G—d forgive
 mee) their lively Hoods,
 Poor Wommen as was born to Washing in their youth !
 And now must go and Larn other Buisnesses Four Sooth
 But if so be They leave their Lines what are they to
 go at—
 They won't do for Angell's—nor any Trade like That,
 Nor we cant Sow Babby Work—for that's all Bespoke,—
 For the Queakers in Bridle ! and a vast of the confind
 Folk

Do their own of Themselves—even the bettermost of
 em—aye, and evn them of middling degrees—
 Why God help you Babby Linen ant Bréad and Cheese !
 Nor we can't go a hammering the roads into Dust,
 But we must all go and be Bankers,—like Mr. Marshes
 and Mr. Chamberses—and that 's what we must !
 God nose you oght to have more Concern for our
 Sects,
 When you nose you have suck'd us and hanged round
 our Mutherly necks,
 And remembers what you Owes to Wommen Besides
 washing—
 You ant, curse you, like Men to go a slushing and
 sloshing
 In mob caps, and pattins, adoining of Females Labers
 And prettily jear'd At you great Horse God Meril things,
 ant you now by you next door neighbours—
 Lawk I thinks I see you with your Sleeves tuckt up
 No more like Washing than is drownding of a Pupp—
 And for all Your Fine Water Works going round and
 round,
 They'll scrunch your Bones some day—I'll be bound
 And no more nor be a gudgement,—for it cant come
 to good
 To sit up agin Providence, which your a doing,—nor not
 fit It should,
 For man warnt maid for Wommens starvation,
 Nor to do away Laundrisses as is Links of Creation—
 And cant be dun without in any Country But a naked
 Hottinpot Nation.
 Ah, I wish our Minister would take one of your Tubbs
 And preach a Sermon in it, and give you some good
 rubs—
 But I warrants you reads (for you cant spel we nose)
 nayther Bybills or Good Tracks,
 Or youd no better than Taking the close off one's
 Backs—
 And let your neighbours oxin and Asses alone,—
 And every thing Thats hern,—and give every one their
 Hone !

324 ADDRESS TO STEAM WASHING COMPANY

Well, its God for us All, and every Washer Wommen
for herself,
And so you might, without shoving any on us off the shelf,
But if you warnt Noddies you'd Let wommen abe
And pull of Your Pattins,—and leave the washing to we
That nose what 's what—Or mark what I say,
You'd make a fine Kettle of fish of Your Close some Day—
When the Alder men wants Their Bibs, and their ant
nun at all,
And Crist mass cum—and never a Cloth to lay in Gild
Hall,
Or send a damp shirt to his Woship the Mare
Till hes rumatiz Poor Man, and cant set uprite in his
Chare—
Besides Miss-Matching Larned Ladys Hose, as is sent
for you not to wash (for you dont wash) but to stew
And make Peples Stockins yellor as ought to be Blew,
With a vast more like That,—and all along of Steam,
Which warnt meand by Nater for any sich skeam—
But thats your Losses and you'd have to make It Good,
And I cant say I'm Sorry afore God if you shoud,
For men mought Get their Bread a great many ways
Without taking ourn—aye, and Moor to your Prays
You might go and skim the creme off Mr. Muck-Adams
milky ways—that 's what you might,
Or bete Carpets—or get into Parleamint,—or drive
Crabrolays from morning to night,
Or, if you must be of our sects, be Watchmen, and slepe
upon a poste !
(Which is an od way of sleping, I must say—and a very
hard pillow at most,)
Or you might be any trade, as we are not on that I'm
awares,
Or be Watermen now, (not Water-wommen,) and roe
peple up and down Hungerford stares,
Or If You Was even to Turn Dust Men a *dry sifting* Dirt !
But you oughtint to Hurt Them as never Did You no
Hurt !

Yourn with Anymocity,
BRIDGET JONES.

ODE TO CAPTAIN PARRY

'By the North Pole, I do challenge thee!'—
Love's Labour's Lost.

PARRY, my man! has thy brave leg
 Yet struck its foot against the peg
 On which the world is spun?
 Or hast thou found No Thoroughfare
 Writ by the hand of Nature there
 Where man has never run!

Hast thou yet trac'd the Great Unknown
 Of channels in the Frozen Zone,
 Or held at Icy Bay,
 Hast thou still miss'd the proper track
 For homeward, Indian men that lack
 A bracing by the way?

Still hast thou wasted toil and trouble
 On nothing but the North-Sea Bubble
 Of geographic scholar?
 Or found new ways for ships to shape,
 Instead of winding round the Cape,
 A short cut thro' the collar!

Hast found the way that sighs were sent to¹
 The Pole—tho' God knows whom they went to!
 That track reveal'd to Pope—
 Or if the Arctic waters sally,
 Or terminate in some blind alley,
 A chilly path to grope?

Alas! tho' Ross, in love with snows,
 Has painted them *couleur de rose*,
 It is a dismal doom,
 As Claudio saith, to Winter thrice,
 'In regions of thick-ribbed ice'—
 All bright,—and yet all gloom!

¹ 'And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole.'—*Eloisa to Abelard.*

'Tis well for Gheber souls that sit
Before the fire and worship it
With pecks of Wallsend coals,
With feet upon the fender's front,
Roasting their corns—like Mr. Hunt—
To speculate on poles.

'Tis easy for our Naval Board—
'Tis easy for our Civic Lord
Of London and of ease,
That lies in ninety feet of down,
With fur on his nocturnal gown,
To talk of Frozen Seas!

'Tis fine for Monsieur Ude to sit,
And prate about the mundane spit,
And babble of *Cook's* track—
He'd roast the leather off his toes,
Ere he would trudge thro' polar snows,
To plant a British *Jack*!

Oh, not the proud licentious great,
That travel on a carpet skate,
Can value toils like thine!
What 'tis to take a Hecla range,
Through ice unknown to Mr. Grange,
And alpine lumps of brine!

But we, that mount the Hill o' Rhyme,
Can tell how hard it is to climb
The lofty slippery steep.
Ah! there are more Snow Hills than that
Which doth black Newgate, like a hat,
Upon its forehead, keep.

Perchance thou'rt now—while I am writing—
Feeling a bear's wet grinder biting
About thy frozen spine!
Or thou thyself art eating whale,
Oily, and underdone, and stale,
That, haply, cross'd thy line!

But I'll not dream such dreams of ill—
Rather will I believe thee still
Safe cellar'd in the snow,—
Reciting many a gallant story,
Of British kings and British glory,
To crony Esquimaux—

Cheering that dismal game where Night
Makes one slow move from black to white
Thro' all the tedious year,—
Or smitten by some fond frost fair,
That comb'd out crystals from her hair,
Wooing a seal-skin Dear!

So much a long communion tends,
As Byron says, to make us friends
With what we daily view—
God knows the daintiest taste may come
To love a nose that's like a plum,
In marble, cold and blue!

To dote on hair, an oily fleece!
As tho' it hung from Helen o' Greece—
They say that love prevails
Ev'n in the veriest polar land—
And surely she may steal thy hand
That used to steal thy nails!

But ah, ere thou art fixt to marry,
And take a polar Mrs. Parry,
Think of a six months' gloom—
Think of the wintry waste, and hers,
Each furnish'd with a dozen furs,
Think of thine icy *dome*!

Think of the children born to *blubber*!
Ah me! hast thou an Indian rubber
Inside!—to hold a meal
For months,—about a stone and half
Of whale, and part of a sea calf—
A fillet of salt veal!—

Some walrus ham—no trifle but
 A decent steak—a solid cut
 Of seal—no wafer slice !
 A rein-deer's tongue and drink beside !
 Gallons of Sperm—not rectified !
 And pails of water-ice !

Oh, canst thou fast and then feast thus ?
 Still come away, and teach to us
 Those blessed alternations—
 To-day to run our dinners fine,
 To feed on air and then to dine
 With Civic Corporations—

To save th' Old Bailey daily shilling,
 And then to take a half-year's filling
 In P. N.'s pious Row—
 When ask'd to Hock and haunch o' ven'son,
 Thro' something we have worn our pens on
 For Longman and his Co.

O come and tell us what the Pole is—
 Whether it singular and sole is,—
 Or straight, or crooked bent,—
 If very thick or very thin,—
 Made of what wood—and if akin
 To those there be in Kent.

There 's Combe, there 's Spurzheim, and there 's Gall,
 Have talk'd of poles—yet, after all,
 What has the public learn'd ?
 And Hunt's account must still defer,—
 He sought the *poll* at Westminster—
 And is not yet *return'd* !

Alvanly asks if whist, dear soul,
 Is play'd in snow-towns near the Pole,
 And how the fur-man deals ?
 And Eldon doubts if it be true,
 That icy Chancellors really do
 Exist upon the *seals* !

Barrow, by well-fed office grates,
Talks of his own bechristen'd Straits,
And longs that he were there;
And Croker, in his cabriolet,
Sighs o'er his brown horse, at his Bay,
And pants to cross the *mer*!

O come away, and set us right,
And, haply, throw a northern light
On questions such as these:—
Whether, when this drown'd world was lost,
The surflux waves were lock'd in frost,
And turn'd to Icy Seas!

Is *Ursa Major* white or black?
Or do the Polar tribes attack
Their neighbours—and what for?
Whether they ever play at cuffs,
And then, if they take off their muffs
In pugilistic war?

Tell us, is *Winter* champion there,
As in our milder fighting air?
Say, what are *Chilly* loans?
What cures they have for rheums beside,
And if their hearts get ossified
From eating bread of bones?

Whether they are such dwarfs—the quicker
To circulate the vital liquor¹,—

And then, from head to heel—
How short the Methodists must choose
Their dumpy envoys not to lose
Their toes in spite of zeal?

Whether 'twill soften or sublime it
To preach of Hell in such a climate—

Whether may Wesley hope
To win their souls—or that old function
Of seals—with the extreme of unction—
Bespeaks them for the Pope?

¹ Buffon.

Whether the lamps will e'er be 'learned'
 Where six months' 'midnight oil' is burned,
 Or Letters must defer
 With people that have never conn'd
 An A, B, C, but live beyond
 The *Sound of Lancaster*!

O come away at any rate—
 Well hast thou earn'd a downier state—
 With all thy hardy peers—
 Good lack, thou must be glad to smell dock,
 And rub thy feet with opodeldock,
 After such frosty years.

Mayhap, some gentle dame at last,
 Smit by the perils thou hast pass'd,
 However coy before,
 Shall bid thee now set up thy rest
 In that *Brest Harbour*, Woman's breast,
 And tempt the Fates no more!

ODE TO W. KITCHENER, M.D.

'I rule the roast, as Milton says!'—*Caleb Quotem.*

OH! multifarious man!
 Thou Wondrous, Admirable Kitchen Crichton:
 Born to enlighten
 The laws of Optics, Peptics, Music, Cooking—
 Master of the Piano—and the Pan—
 As busy with the kitchen as the skies!
 Now looking
 At some rich stew thro' Galileo's eyes—
 Or boiling eggs—timed to a metronome—
 As much at home
 In spectacles as in mere isinglass—
 In the art of frying brown—as a digression
 On music and poetical expression,—

Whereas, how few of all our cooks, alas !
Could tell Calliope from 'Calliopee !'

How few there be
Could leave the lowest for the highest stories,
(Observatories,)

And turn, like thee, Diana's calculator,
However *cook*'s synonymous with *Kater* !¹

Alas ! still let me say,
How few could lay
The carving knife beside the tuning fork,
Like the proverbial *Jack* ready for any work !

Oh, to behold thy features in thy book !
Thy proper head and shoulders in a plate,
How it would look !

With one rais'd eye watching the dial's date,
And one upon the roast, gently cast down—
Thy chops—done nicely brown—
The garnish'd brow—with 'a few leaves of bay'—
The hair—'done Wiggy's way !'

And still one studious finger near thy brains,
As if thou wert just come
From editing some

New soup—or hashing Dibdin's cold remains !
Or, Orpheus-like,—fresh from thy dying strains
Of music,—Epping luxuries of sound,

As Milton says, 'in many a bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,'
Whilst all thy tame stuff'd leopards listen'd round !

Oh, rather thy whole proper length reveal,
Standing like Fortune,—on the jack—thy wheel.
(Thou art, like Fortune, full of chops and changes,
Thou hast a fillet too before thine eye !)
Scanning our kitchen, and our vocal ranges,
As tho' it were the same to sing or fry—
Nay, so it is—hear how Miss Paton's throat
Makes 'fritters' of a note !

¹ Captain Kater, the Moon's Surveyor.

And how Tom Cook (Fryer and Singer born
 By name and nature) oh! how night and morn
 He for the nicest public taste doth dish up
 The good things from that *Pan* of music, Bishop!
 And is not reading near akin to feeding,
 Or why should Oxford Sausages be fit
 Receptacles for wit?
 Or why should Cambridge put its little, smart,
 Minc'd brains into a Tart?
 Nay, then, thou wert but wise to frame receipts,
 Book-treats,
 Equally to instruct the Cook and cram her—
 Receipts to be devour'd, as well as read,
 The Culinary Art in gingerbread—
 The Kitchen's *Eaten* Grammar!

Oh, very pleasant is thy motley page—
 Aye, very pleasant in its chatty vein—
 So—in a kitchen—would have talk'd Montaigno,
 That merry Gascon—humourist, and sage!
 Let slender minds with single themes engage,
 Like Mr. Bowles with his eternal Pope,—
 Or Haydon on perpetual Haydon,—or
 Hume on 'Twice three make four,'
 Or Lovelass upon Wills,—Thou goest on
 Plaiting ten topics, like Tate Wilkinson!
 Thy brain is like a rich Kaleidoscope,
 Stuff'd with a brilliant medley of odd bits,
 And ever shifting on from change to change,
 Saucepans—old Songs—Pills—Spectacles—and Spits!
 Thy range is wider than a Rumford Range!
 Thy grasp a miracle!—till I recall
 Th' indubitable cause of thy variety—
 Thou art, of course, th' Epitome of all
 That spying—frying—singing—mix'd Society
 Of Scientific Friends, who used to meet
 Welch Rabbits—and thyself—in Warren Street!
 Oh, hast thou still those *Conversazioni*,
 Where learned visitors discoursed—and fed?
 There came Belzoni,

Fresh from the ashes of Egyptian dead—
 And gentle Poki—and that Royal Pair,
 Of whom thou didst declare—
 ‘Thanks to the greatest *Cooke* we ever read—
 They were—what *Sandwiches* should be—half bred!’
 There fam’d M’Adam from his manual toil
 Relax’d—and freely own’d he took thy hints
 On ‘making *Broth* with *Flints*’—
 There Parry came, and show’d thee polar oil
 For melted butter—Combe with his medullary
 Notions about the *Skullery*,
 And Mr. Poole, too partial to a broil—
 There witty Rogers came, that punning elf!
 Who used to swear thy book
 Would really look
 A *Delphic* ‘Oracle,’ if laid on *Delf*—
 There, once a month, came Campbell and discuss’d
 His own—and thy own—‘*Magazine of Taste*’—
 There Wilberforce the Just
 Came, in his old black suit, till once he trac’d
 Thy sly advice to *Poachers* of Black Folks,
 That ‘do not break their *yolks*,’—
 Which huff’d him home, in grave disgust and haste!
 There came John Clare, the poet, nor forbore
 Thy *Patties*—thou wert hand-and-glove with Moore,
 Who call’d thee ‘*Kitchen Addison*’—for why?
 Thou givest rules for Health and Peptic Pills,
 Forms for made dishes, and receipts for Wills,
 ‘*Teaching us how to live and how to die!*’
 There came thy Cousin-Cook, good Mrs. Fry—
 There Trench, the Thames Projector, first brought on
 His sine *Quay* non—
 There Martin would drop in on Monday eves,
 Or Fridays, from the pens, and raise his breath
 ‘Gainst cattle days and death,—
 Answer’d by Mellish, feeder of fat beeves,
 Who swore that Frenchmen never could be eager
 For fighting on soup meagre—
 ‘And yet, (as thou would’st add,) the French have seen
 A Marshal *Tureen!*’

Great was thy Evening Cluster!—often grac'd
 With Dollond—Burgess—and Sir Humphry Davy!
 'Twas there M'Dermot first inclin'd to Taste,—
 There Colburn learn'd the art of making paste
 For puffs—and Accum analysed a gravy.
 Colman—the Cutter of Coleman Street, 'tis said
 Came there,—and Parkins with his Ex-wise-head,
 (His claim to letters)—Kater, too, the Moon's
 Crony,—and Graham, lofty on balloons,—
 There Croly stalk'd with holy humour heated,
 (Who wrote a light-horse play, which Yates completed)—
 And Lady Morgan, that grinding organ,
 And Brasbridge telling anecdotes of spoons,—
 Madame Valbrègue thrice honour'd thee, and came
 With great Rossini, his own bow and fiddle,—
 The Dibbins,—Tom, Charles, Frognall,—came with tuns
 Of poor old books, old puns!
 And even Irving spar'd a night from fame,—
 And talk'd—till thou didst stop him in the middle,
 To serve round *Tewah-diddle*¹.

Then all the guests rose up, and sighed good-bye!
 So let them:—thou thyself art still a *Host*!

Dibdin—Cornaro—Newton—Mrs. Fry!

Mrs. Glasse, Mr. Spec!—Lovelass—and Weber,
 Matthews in Quotem—Moore's fire-worshipping
 Gheber—

Thrice-worthy Worthy! seem by thee engross'd!
 Howbeit the Peptic Cook still rules the roast,
 Potent to hush all ventriloquial snarling,—
 And ease the bosom pangs of indigestion!

Thou art, sans question,
 The Corporation's love—its Doctor *Darling*!
 Look at the Civic Palate—nay, the Bed
 Which set dear Mrs. Opie on supplying
 'Illustrations of *Lying*!'

Ninety square feet of down from heel to head
 It measured, and I dread

¹ The Doctor's composition for a *night-cap*.

Was haunted by that terrible night *Mare*,
 A monstrous burthen on the corporation!—
 Look at the Bill of Fare, for one day's share,
 Sea-turtles by the soore—Oxen by droves,
 Geese, turkeys, by the flock—fishes and loaves
 Countless, as when the Lilliputian nation
 Was making up the huge man-mountain's ration!

Oh! worthy Doctor! surely thou hast driven
 The squatting Demon from great Garratt's breast—
 (His honour seems to rest!—)

And what is thy reward?—Hath London given
 Thee public thanks for thy important service?
 Alas! not even

The tokens it bestow'd on Howe and Jervis!—
 Yet could I speak as Orators should speak
 Before the worshipful the Common Council,
 (Utter my bold bad grammar and pronounce ill,)
 Thou should'st not miss thy Freedom, for a week,
 Richly engross'd on vellum:—Reason urges
 That he who rules our cookery—that he
 Who edits soups and gravies, ought to be
 A *Citizen*, where sauce can make a *Burgess*!

ODE TO ADMIRAL LORD GAMBIER, G.C.B.

'Well, if you reclaim such as Hood, your Society will
 deserve the thanks of the country.'—*Temperance Society's
 Herald*, vol. i, No. I, p. 8.

'My father, when last I from Guinea
 Came home with abundance of wealth,
 Said, "Jack never be such a ninny
 As to drink——" says I, "Father, your health."''
Nothing like Grog.

OH! Admiral Gam—— I dare not mention *bier*,
 In such a temperate ear,—
 Oh! Admiral Gam—— an Admiral of the Blue,
 Of course to read the Navy List aright,
 For strictly shunning wine of either hue,
 You can't be Admiral of the Red or White:—

Oh, Admiral Gam! consider ere you call
 On merry Englishmen to wash their throattles
 With water only; and to break their bottles
 To stick, for fear of trespass, on the wall
 Of Exeter Hall!

Consider, I beseech, the contrariety
 Of cutting off our brandy, gin, and rum
 And then, by tracts, inviting us to come
 And 'mix in your society!'
 In giving rules to dine, or sup, or lunch,
 Consider Nature's ends before you league us
 To strip the Isle of Rum of all its punch—
 To dock the Isle of Mull of all its negus—
 Or doom—to suit your milk-and-water view—
 The Isle of Skye to nothing but sky-blue!

Consider,—for appearance' sake, consider
 The sorry figure of a spirit-ridder,
 Going on this crusade against the suttler;
 A sort of Hudibras—without a Butler!

Consider—ere you break the ardent spirits
 Of father, mother, brother, sister, daughter;
 What are your beverage's washy merits?
 Gin may be low—but I have known low-water!

Consider well, before you thus deliver,
 With such authority, your sloppy canon;
 Should British tars taste nothing but the *river*,
 Because the *Chesapeake* once fought the *Shannon*?

Consider too—before all Eau-de-vie,
 Schiedam, or other drinkers, you rebut—
 To bite a bitten dog all curs agree;
 But who would cut a man because he's cut?

Consider—ere you bid the poor to fill
 Their murmuring stomachs with the 'murmuring
 rill,'—

Consider that their streams are not like ours,
 Reflecting heav'n, margin'd by sweet flow'rs;

On their dark pools by day no sun reclines,
 By night no Jupiter, no Venus shines;
 Consider life's sour taste, that bids them mix
 Rum with their Acheron, or gin with Styx:
 If you must pour out water to the poor, oh!
 Let it be aqua d'oro!

Consider—ere as furious as a griffin,
 Against a glass of grog you make such work,
 A man may like a stiff 'un,
 And yet not be a Burke!

Consider, too, before you bid all skinkers
 Turn water-drinkers,
 What sort of fluid fills their native rivers;
 Their Mudiboo's, and Niles, and Guadalquivers.
 How should you like, yourself, in glass or mug,
 The Bog—the Bug—
 The Maine—the Weser—or that freezer, Neva?
 Nay, take the very rill of classic ground—
 Lord Byron found
 Ev'n Castaly the better for Geneva.

Consider—if to vote Reform's arrears,
 His Majesty should please to make you peers,
 Your titles would be very far from trumps,
 To figure in a book of blue and red:—
 The Duke of Draw-well—what a name to dread!
 Marquis of Main-pipe; Earl New-River-Head!
 And Temperance's chief, the Prince of Pumps!

ODE TO SIR ANDREW AGNEW, BART.

'At certain seasons he makes a prodigious clattering
 with his bill.'—*Selby*.

'The bill is rather long, flat, and tinged with green.'—
 Bewick.

O ANDREW FAIRSERVICE,—but I beg pardon;
 You never labour'd in Di Vernon's garden,
 On curly kale and cabbages intent,—
 Andrew Churchservice was the thing I meant,—

You are a Christian—I would be the same,
Although we differ, and I'll tell you why,
Not meaning to make game,
I do not like my Church so very High !

When people talk, as talk they will,
About your bill,
They say, among their other jibes and small jeers,
That, if you had your way,
You'd make the seventh day
As overbearing as the Dey of Algiers.
Talk of converting Blacks—

By your attacks,
You make a thing so horrible of *one* day,
Each nigger, they will bet a something tidy,
Would rather be a heathenish Man Friday,
Than your Man Sunday !

So poor men speak,
Who, once a week,
P'rhaps, after weaving artificial flowers,
Can snatch a glance of Nature's kinder bowers,
And revel in a bloom
That is not of the loom,
Making the earth, the streams, the skies, the trees,
A Chapel of Ease.

Whereas, as you would plan it,
Wall'd in with hard Scotch granite,
People all day should look to their behaviours ;—
But though there be, as Shakspeare owns,
'Sermons in stones,'

Zounds ! Would you have us work at them like
paviours ?

Spontaneous is pure devotion's fire ;
And in a green wood many a soul has built
A new Church, with a fir-tree for its spire,
Where Sin has prayed for peace, and wept for guilt,
Better than if an architect the plan drew ;
We know of old how medicines were back'd,
But true Religion needs not to be quack'd
By an Un-merry Andrew !

Suppose a poor town-weary sallow elf
 At Primrose-hill would renovate himself,
 Or drink (and no great harm)
Milk genuine at *Chalk* Farm,—
 The innocent intention who would baulk,
 And drive him back into St. Bennet Fink?
 For my part, for my life, I cannot think
 A walk on Sunday is 'the Devil's Walk.'

But there's a sect of Deists, and their creed
 Is D—ing other people to be d—d,—
 Yea, all that are not of their saintly level,
 They make a pious point
 To send, with an 'aroint,'
 Down to that great Fillhellenist, the Devil.
 To such, a ramble by the River Lea,
 Is really treading on the 'Banks of D—.'

Go down to Margate, wisest of law-makers,
 And say unto the sea, as Canute did,
 (Of course the sea will do as it is bid,)
 'This is the Sabbath—let there be no Breakers!'
 Seek London's Bishop, on some Sunday morn,
 And try him with your tenets to inoculate,—
 Abuse his fine souchong, and say in scorn,
 'This is not *Churchman's* Chocolate!'

Or, seek Dissenters at their mid-day meal,
 And read them from your Sabbath Bill some passages,
 And while they eat their mutton, beef, and veal,
 Shout out with holy zeal,—
 'These are not *Chappel's* sassage!'
 Suppose your Act should act up to your will,
 Yet how will it appear to Mrs. Grundy,
 To hear you saying of this pious bill,
 'It *works* well—on a Sunday!'

To knock down apple-stalls is now too late,
 Except to starve some poor old harmless madam;—
 You might have done some good, and chang'd our fate,
 Could you have upset *that*, which ruined Adam!

'Tis useless to prescribe salt-cod and eggs,
 Or lay post-horses under legal fetters,
 While Tattersall's on Sunday stirs its *Legs*,
 Folks look for good examples from their *Betters*!

Consider,—Acts of Parliament may bind
 A man to go where Irvings are discoursing—
 But as for forcing 'proper frames of mind,'
 Minds are not *framed*, like melons, for such *forcing*!

Remember, as a Scottish legislator,
 The Scotch Kirk always has a Moderator;
 Meaning one need not ever be sojourning
 In a long Sermon Lane without a turning.
 Such grave old maids as Portia and Zenobia
 May like discourses with a skein of threads,
 And love a lecture for its many heads,
 But as for me, I have the Hydra-phobia.

Religion one should never overdo:
 Right glad I am no minister you be,
 For you would say your service, sir, to me,
 Till I should say, 'My service, sir, to you.'
 Six days made all that is, you know, and then
 Came that of rest—by holy ordination,
 As if to hint unto the sons of men,
 After creation should come re-creation.
 Read right this text, and do not further search
 To make a Sunday Workhouse of the Church.

ODE TO DOCTOR HAHNEMANN

THE HOMŒOPATHIST

WELL, Doctor,
 Great concoctor

Of medicines to help in man's distress;
 Diluting down the strong to meek,
 And making e'vn the weak more weak,
 'Fine by degrees and beautifully less'—
 Founder of a new system economic,
 To druggists anything but comic;

Fram'd the whole race of Ollapods to fret,
 At profits, like thy doses, very small ;
 To put all Doctor's Boys in evil case,
 Thrown out of bread, of physic, and of place,—
 And show us old Apothecaries' Hall
 'To Let.'

How fare thy Patients ? are they dead or living,
 Or, well as can expected be, with such
 A style of practice, liberally giving
 'A sum of more to that which had too much ?'
 Dost thou preserve the human frame, or turf it ?
 Do thorough draughts cure thorough colds or not ?
 Do fevers yield to any thing that's hot ?
 Or hearty dinners neutralise a surfeit ?
 Is't good advice for gastronomic ills,
 When Indigestion's face with pain is crumpling,
 To cry 'Discard those Peristaltic Pills.
 Take a hard dumpling !'

Tell me, thou German Cousin,
 And tell me honestly without a diddle,
 Does an attenuated dose of rosin
 Act as a *tonic* on the old *Scotch fiddle* ?
 Tell me, when Anhalt-Coethen babies wriggle,
 Like eels just caught by sniggle,
 Martyrs to some acidity internal,
 That gives them pangs infernal,
 Meanwhile the lip grows black, the eye enlarges,
 Say, comes there all at once a cherub-calm,
 Thanks to that soothing homœopathic balm,
 The half of half, of half, a drop of '*varges*' ?

Suppose, for instance, upon Leipzig's plain,
 A soldier pillow'd on a heap of slain,
 In urgent want both of a priest and proctor ;
 When lo ! there comes a man in green and red,
 A featherless cock'd-hat adorns his head,
 In short a Saxon military doctor—

Would he, indeed, on the right treatment fix,
 To cure a horrid gaping wound,
 Made by a ball that weigh'd a pound,
 If he well pepper'd it with number six ?

Suppose a felon doomed to swing
 Within a *rope*,
 Might friends not hope
 To cure him with a *string* ?
 Suppose his breath arriv'd at a full stop,
 The shades of death in a black cloud before him,
 Would a quintillionth dose of the New Drop
 Restore him ?

Fancy a man gone rabid from a bite,
 Snapping to left and right,
 And giving tongue like one of Sebright's hounds,
 Terrific sounds,
 The pallid neighbourhood with horror cowing,
 To hit the proper homœopathic mark ;
 Now, might not ' the laste taste in life ' of bark,
 Stop his *bow-wow-ing* ?
 Nay, with a well-known remedy to fit him,
 Would he not mend, if with all proper care,
 He took ' a hair
 Of the dog that bit him ' ?

Picture a man—we'll say a Dutch Meinheer—
 In evident emotion,
 Bent o'er the bulwark of the Batavier,
 Owing those symptoms queer—
 Some feel in a *Sick Transit* o'er the ocean,
 Can any thing in life be more pathetic
 Than when he turns to us his wretched face ?—
 But would it mend his case
 To be decillionth-dos'd
 With something like the ghost
 Of an emetic ?

Lo ! now a darken'd room !
 Look through the dreary gloom,

And see that coverlet of wildest form,
 Tost like the billows in a storm,
 Where ever and anon, with groans, emerges
 A ghastly head!—

While two impatient arms still beat the bed,
 Like a strong swimmer's struggling with the surges;
 There Life and Death are on their battle-plain,
 With many a mortal ecstasy of pain—
 What shall support the body in its trial,
 Cool the hot blood, wild dream, and parching skin,
 And tame the raging Malady within—
 A sniff of Next-to-Nothing in a phial?

Oh! Doctor Hahnemann, if here I laugh,
 And cry together, half and half,
 Excuse me, 'tis a mood the subject brings,
 To think, whilst I have crow'd like chanticleer,
 Perchance, from some dull eye the hopeless tear
 Hath gush'd, with my light levity at schism,
 To mourn some Martyr of Empiricism!
 Perchance, on thy own system, I have giv'n
 A pang, superfluous to the pains of Sorrow,
 Who weeps with Memory from morn till even;
 Where comfort there is none to lend or borrow,
 Sighing to one sad strain,
 'She will not come again,
 To-morrow, nor to-morrow, nor to-morrow!

Doctor, forgive me, if I dare prescribe
 A rule for thee thyself, and all thy tribe,
 Inserting a few serious words by stealth;
 Above all price of wealth
The Body's Jewel,—not for minds profane,
Or hands, to tamper with in practice vain—
Like to a Woman's Virtue is Man's Health.
A heavenly gift within a holy shrine!
To be approach'd and touch'd with serious fear,
By hands made pure, and hearts of faith severe,
Ev'n as the Priesthood of the ONE divine!

But, zounds ! each fellow with a suit of black,
 And, strange to fame,
 With a diploma'd name,
 That carries two more letters pick-a-back,
 With cane, and snuff-box, powder'd wig, and block,
 Invents *his* dose, as if it were a chrism,
 And dares to treat our wondrous mechanism,
 Familiar as the works of old Dutch clock ;
 Yet, how would common sense esteem the man,
 Oh how, my unrelated German cousin,
 Who having some such time-keeper, on trial,
 And finding it too fast, enforc'd the dial,
 To strike upon the Homœopathic plan
 Of fourteen to the dozen ?

Take my advice, 'tis given without a fee,
 Drown, drown your book ten thousand fathoms deep,
 Like Prospero's beneath the briny sea,
 For spells of magic have all gone to sleep !
 Leave no decillionth fragment of your works,
 To help the interests of quacking Burkes ;
 Aid not in murdering ev'n widows' mites,—
 And now forgive me for my candid zeal,
 I had not said so much, but that I feel
 Should you *take ill* what here my Muse indites,
 An Ode-ling more will set you all to rights.

THE EPPING HUNT

'On Monday they began to hunt.'—*Chery Chase.*

JOHN HUGGINS was as bold a man
 As trade did ever know,
 A warehouse good he had, that stood
 Hard by the church of Bow.

There people bought Dutch cheeses round,
 And single Glos'ter flat,—
 And English butter in a lump,
 And Irish—in a *pat*.

Six days a week beheld him stand,
His business next his heart,
At *counter* with his apron tied
About his *counter-part*.

The seventh in a sluice-house box,
He took his pipe and pot;
On Sundays for *eel-piety*,
A very noted spot.

Ah, blest if he had never gone
Beyond its rural shed!
One Easter-tide, some evil guide
Put Epping in his head!

Epping for butter justly fam'd,
And pork in sausage pop't;
Where winter time, or summer time,
Pig's flesh is always *chop't*.

But famous more, as annals tell,
Because of Easter chase;
There ev'ry year, 'twixt dog and deer,
There is a gallant race.

With Monday's sun John Huggins rose,
And slapt his leather thigh,
And sang the burthen of the song,
'This day a stag must die.'

For all the live-long day before,
And all the night in bed,
Like Beekford, he had nourish'd 'Thoughts
On Hunting' in his head.

Of horn and morn, and hark and bark,
And echo's answering sounds,
All poet's wit hath ever writ
In *dog-rel* verse of *hounds*.

Alas! there was no warning voice
To whisper in his ear,
Thou art a fool in leaving *Cheap*
To go and hunt the *deer*!

No thought he had of twisted spine,
Or broken arms or legs ;
Not *chicken-hearted* he, altho'
'Twas whisper'd of his *eggs* !

Ride out he would, and hunt he would,
Nor dreamt of ending ill ;
Mayhap with Dr. *Ridout's* fee,
And Surgeon *Hunter's* bill.

So he drew on his Sunday boots,
Of lustre superfine ;
The liquid black they wore that day,
Was *Warren*-ted to shine.

His yellow buckskins fitted close,
As once, upon a stag ;
Thus well equipt he gaily skipt,
At once upon his nag.

But first to him that held the rein,
A crown he nimbly flung ;
For holding of the horse ?—why, no—
For holding of his tongue.

To say the horse was Huggins' own,
Would only be a brag ;
His neighbour Fig and he went halves
Like Centaurs, in a nag.

And he that day had got the gray,
Unknown to brother cit ;
The horse he knew would never tell,
Altho' it was a *tit*.

A well-bred horse he was I wis,
As he began to show,
By quickly 'rearing up within
The way he ought to go.'

But Huggins, like a wary man,
Was ne'er from saddle cast ;
Resolved by going very slow,
On sitting very fast.

And so he jogged to Tot'n'am Cross
An ancient town well known,
Where Edward wept for Eleanor
In mortar and in stone.

A royal game of fox and goose,
To play on such a loss;
Wherever she sets down her *orts*,
Thereby to put a *cross*.

Now Huggins had a crony here,
That lived beside the way;
One that had promised sure to be
His comrade for the day.

Whereas the man had chang'd his mind,
Meanwhile upon the case!
And meaning not to hunt at all,
Had gone to Enfield Chase.

For why, his spouse had made him vow
To let a game alone,
Where folks that ride a bit of blood,
May break a bit of bone.

'Now, be his wife a plague for life!
A coward sure is he:'
Then Huggins turned his horse's head
And crossed the bridge of Lea.

Thence slowly on thro' Laytonstone,
Past many a Quaker's box,—
No friends to hunters after deer,
Tho' followers of a *Fox*.

And many a score behind—before—
The self-same route inclin'd,
And minded all to march one way,
Made one great march of mind.

Gentle and simple, he and she,
And swell, and blood, and prig;
And some had carts, and some a chaise,
According to their gig.

Some long-ear'd jacks, some knacker's hacks,
(However odd it sounds,)
Let out that day to *hunt*, instead
Of going to the hounds!

And some had horses of their own,
And some were forced to job it;
And some, while they inclin'd to *Hunt*
Betook themselves to *Cob-it*.

All sorts of vehicles and vans,
Bad, middling, and the smart;
Here roll'd along the gay barouche,
And there a dirty cart!

And lo! a cart that held a squad
Of costermonger line;
With one poor hack, like Pegasus,
That slav'd for all the Nine!

Yet marvel not at any load,
That any horse might drag;
When all, that morn, at once were drawn
Together by a stag!

Now when they saw John Huggins go
At such a sober pace;
'Hallo!' cried they; 'come, trot away,
You'll never see the chase!'

But John, as grave as any judge,
Made answers quite as blunt;
'It will be time enough to trot,
When I begin to hunt!'

And so he paced to Woodford Wells,
Where many a horseman met,
And letting go the *reins*, of course,
Prepared for *heavy wet*.

And lo! within the crowded door,
Stood Rounding, jovial elf;
Here shall the Muse frame no excuse,
But frame the man himself.

A snow white head, a merry eye,
A cheek of jolly blush ;
A claret tint laid on by health,
With master reynard's brush ;

A hearty frame, a courteous bow,
The prince he learn'd it from ;
His age about three-score and ten,
And there you have Old Tom.

In merriest key I trow was he,
So many guests to boast ;
So certain congregations meet,
And elevate the host.

'Now welcome, lads,' quoth he, 'and prads,
You're all in glorious luck :
Old Robin has a run to-day,
A noted forest buck.

'Fair Mead's the place, where Bob and Tom
In red already ride ;
'Tis but a *step*, and on a horse
You soon may go a *stride*.'

So off they scamper'd, man and horse,
As time and temper press'd ;—
But Huggins, hitching on a tree,
Branch'd off from all the rest.

Howbeit he tumbled down in time
To join with Tom and Bob,
All in Fair Mead, which held that day
Its own fair meed of mob.

Idlers to wit—no Guardians some,
Of Tattlers in a squeeze ;
Ramblers, in heavy carts and vans,
Spectators, up in trees.

Butchers on backs of butchers' hacks,
That shambl'd to and fro !
Bakers intent upon a buck,
Neglectful of the *dough* !

Change Alley Bears to speculate,
As usual, for a fall ;
And green and scarlet runners, such
As never climb'd a wall !

'Twas strange to think what difference
A single creature made ;
A single stag had caused a whole
Stagnation in their trade.

Now Huggins from his saddle rose,
And in the stirrups stood ;
And lo ! a little cart that came
Hard by a little wood.

In shape like half a hearse,—tho' not
For corpses in the least ;
For this contained the *deer alive*,
And not the *deer deceased* !

And now began a sudden stir,
And then a sudden shout,
The prison-doors were opened wide,
And Robin bounded out !

His antler'd head shone blue and red,
Bedeck'd with ribbons fine ;
Like other bucks that come to 'list
The hawbucks in the line.

One curious gaze of mild amaze,
He turn'd and shortly took :
Then gently ran adown the mead,
And bounded o'er the brook.

Now Huggins, standing far aloof,
Had never seen the deer,
Till all at once he saw the beast
Come charging in his rear.

Away he went, and many a score
Of riders did the same,
On horse and ass—like high and low
And Jack pursuing game !

Good Lord ! to see the riders now,
Thrown off with sudden whirl,
A score within the purling brook
Enjoy'd their 'early purl.'

A score were sprawling on the grass,
And beavers fell in show'rs ;
There was another *Floorer* there,
Beside the Queen of Flowers !

Some lost their stirrups, some their whips,
Some had no caps to show ;
But few, like Charles at Charing Cross,
Rode on in *Statue quo*.

'O dear ! O dear !' now might you hear,
'I've surely broke a bone ;'
'My head is sore,'—with many more
Such speeches from the *thrown*.

Howbeit their wailings never moved
The wide Satanic clan,
Who grinned, as once the devil grinn'd,
To see the fall of Man.

And hunters good, that understood,
Their laughter knew no bounds,
To see the horses 'throwing off,'
So long before the hounds.

For deer must have due course of law,
Like men the Courts among ;
Before those Barristers the dogs
Proceed to 'giving tongue.'

But now Old Robin's foes were set,
That fatal taint to find,
That always is scent after him,
Yet always left behind.

And here observe how dog and man
A different temper shows,
What hound resents that he is sent
To follow his own nose ?

Towler and Jowler—howlers all,
No single tongue was mute ;
The stag had led a hart, and lo !
The whole pack follow'd suit.

No spur he lack'd, fear stuck a knife
And fork in either haunch ;
And every dog he knew had got
An eye-tooth to his paunch !

Away, away ! he scudded like
A ship before the gale ;
Now flew to 'hills we know not of,'
Now, nun-like, took the vale.

Another squadron charging now,
Went off at furious pitch ;—
A perfect Tam o' Shanter mob,
Without a single witch.

But who was he with flying skirts,
A hunter did endorse,
And like a poet seem'd to ride
Upon a winged horse,—

A whipper in ? no whipper in :
A huntsman ? no such soul :
A connoisseur, or amateur ?
Why yes,—a Horse Patrol.

A member of police, for whom
The county found a nag,
And, like Acteon in the tale,
He found himself in stag !

Away they went then dog and deer,
And hunters all away,—
The maddest horses never knew
Mad staggers such as they !

Some gave a shout, some roll'd about,
And antick'd as they rode,
And butchers whistled on their curs,
And milkmen *tally-ho'd* !

About two score there were, not more,
That galloped in the race;
The rest, alas! lay on the grass,
As once in Chevy Chase!

But even those that galloped on,
Were fewer every minute,—
The field kept getting more select,
Each thicket served to thin it.

For some pulled up, and left the hunt,
Some fell in miry bogs,
And vainly rose and 'ran a muck,'
To overtake the dogs.

And some, in charging hurdle stakes,
Were left bereft of sense,
What else could be premised of blades
That never learn'd to fence?

But Rounding, Tom, and Bob, no gate,
Nor hedge nor ditch could stay;
O'er all they went, and did the work
Of leap years in a day!

And by their side see Huggins ride,
As fast as he could speed;
For, like Mazeppa, he was quite
At mercy of his steed.

No means he had, by timely check,
The gallop to remit,
For firm and fast, between his teeth,
The biter held the bit.

Trees raced along, all Essex fled
Beneath him as he sate,—
He never saw a county go
At such a county rate!

'Hold hard! hold hard! you'll lame the dogs:'
Quoth Huggins, 'So I do,—
I've got the saddle well in hand,
And hold as hard as you!'

Good lord ! to see him ride along,
And throw his arms about,
As if with stitches in the side,
That he was drawing out !

And now he bounded up and down,
Now like a jelly shook :
Till bump'd and gall'd—yet not where Gall,
For bumps did ever look !

And rowing with his legs the while,
As tars are apt to ride ;
With every kick he gave a prick,
Deep in the horse's side !

But soon the horse was well avenged,
For cruel smart of spurs,
For, riding through a moor, he pitched
His master in a furze !

Where sharper set than hunger is
He squatted all forlorn ;
And like a bird was singing out
While sitting on a thorn !

Right glad was he, as well might be,
Such cushions to resign :
' Possession is nine points,' but his
Seemed more than ninety-nine.

Yet worse than all the prickly points
That enter'd in his skin,
His nag was running off the while
The thorns were running in !

Now had a Papist seen his sport,
Thus laid upon the shelf,
Altho' no horse he had to cross,
He might have cross'd himself.

Yet surely still the wind is ill
That none can say is fair ;
A jolly wight there was, that rode
Upon a sorry mare !

A sorry mare that surely came
Of pagan blood and bone ;
For down upon her knees she went,
To many a stock and stone !

Now seeing Huggins' nag adrift,
This farmer, shrewd and sage,
Resolv'd, by changing horses here,
To hunt another stage !

Tho' felony, yet who would let
Another's horse alone,
Whose neck is placed in jeopardy
By riding on his own ?

And yet the conduct of the man
Seemed honest-like and fair ;
For he seem'd willing, horse and all,
To go before the *mare* !

So up on Huggins' horse he got,
And swiftly rode away,
While Huggins mounted on the mare
Done brown upon a bay !

And off they set, in double chase,
For such was fortune's whim,
The farmer rode to hunt the stag,
And Huggins hunted him !

Alas ! with one that rode so well
In vain it was to strive ;
A dab was he, as dabs should be—
All leaping and alive !

And here of Nature's kindly care
Behold a curious proof,
As nags are meant to leap, she puts
A frog in every hoof !

Whereas the mare, altho' her share
She had of hoof and frog,
On coming to a gate stopp'd short
As stiff as any log ;

Whilst Huggins in the stirrup stood
With neck like neck of crane,
As sings the Scottish song—'to see
The *gate* his *hart* had gane.'

And, lo! the dim and distant hunt
Diminish'd in a trice:
The steeds, like Cinderella's team,
Seem'd dwindling into mice;

And, far remote, each scarlet coat
Soon flitted like a spark,—
Tho' still the forest murmur'd back
An echo of the bark!

But sad at soul John Huggins turn'd:
No comfort he could find;
Whilst thus the 'Hunting Chorus' sped,
To stay five bars behind.

For tho' by dint of spur he got
A leap in spite of fate—
Howbeit there was no toll at all,
They could not clear the gate.

And, like Fitzjames, he cursed the hunt,
And sorely cursed the day,
And mused a new Gray's elegy
On his departed gray!

Now many a sign at Woodford town
Its Inn-vitation tells:
But Huggins, full of ills, of course
Betook him to the Wells,

Where Rounding tried to cheer him up
With many a merry laugh:
But Huggins thought of neighbour Fig,
And call'd for half-and-half.

Yet, spite of drink, he could not blink
Remembrance of his loss;
To drown a care like his, required
Enough to drown a horse.

When thus forlorn, a merry horn
Struck up without the door,—
The mounted mob were all return'd;
The Epping Hunt was o'er!

And many a horse was taken out
Of saddle, and of shaft;
And men, by dint of drink, became
The only '*beasts of draught*.'

For now begun a harder run
On wine, and gin, and beer;
And overtaken men discuss'd
The overtaken doer.

How far he ran, and eke how fast,
And how at bay he stood,
Deerlike, resolved to sell his life
As dearly as he could;—

And how the hunters stood aloof,
Regardful of their lives,
And shunn'd a beast, whose very horns
They knew could *handle* knives!

How Huggins stood when he was rubb'd
By help and ostler kind,
And when they cleaned the clay before,
How '*worse remain'd behind*.'

And one, how he had found a horse
Adrift—a goodly gray!
And kindly rode the nag, for fear
The nag should go astray.

Now Huggins, when he heard the tale,
Jump'd up with sudden glee;
'A goodly gray! why, then, I say
That gray belongs to me!

'Let me endorse again my horse,
Deliver'd safe and sound;
And, gladly, I will give the man
A bottle and a pound!'

The wine was drunk,—the money paid,
Tho' not without remorse,
To pay another man so much,
For riding on his horse ;—

And let the chase again take place
For many a long, long year—
John Huggins will not ride again
To hunt the Epping Deer !

MORAL.

Thus pleasure oft eludes our grasp,
Just when we think to grip her ;
And hunting after Happiness,
We only hunt a slipper.

FAITHLESS SALLY BROWN

AN OLD BALLAD

YOUNG BEN he was a nice young man,
A carpenter by trade ;
And he fell in love with Sally Brown,
That was a lady's maid.

But as they fetch'd a walk one day,
They met a press-gang crew ;
And Sally she did faint away,
Whilst Ben he was brought to.

The Boatswain swore with wicked words,
Enough to shock a saint,
That though she did seem in a fit,
'Twas nothing but a feint.

'Come, girl,' said he, 'hold up your head,
He'll be as good as me ;
For when your swain is in our boat,
A boatswain he will be.'

So when they'd made their game of her,
 And taken off her elf,
 She roused, and found she only was
 A coming to herself.

'And is he gone, and is he gone?'
 She cried, and wept outright:
 'Then I will to the water side,
 And see him out of sight.'

A waterman came up to her,—
 'Now, young woman,' said he,
 'If you weep on so, you will make
 Eye-water in the sea.'

'Alas! they've taken my beau Ben
 To sail with old Benbow;'
 And her woe began to run afresh,
 As if she'd said Gee woe!

Says he, 'They've only taken him
 To the Tender ship, you see;'
 'The Tender-ship,' cried Sally Brown,
 'What a hard-ship that must be!'

'O! would I were a mermaid now,
 For then I'd follow him;
 But Oh!—I'm not a fish-woman,
 And so I cannot swim.

'Alas! I was not born beneath
 The virgin and the scales,
 So I must curse my cruel stars,
 And walk about in Wales.'

Now Ben had sail'd to many a place
 That's underneath the world;
 But in two years the ship came home,
 And all her sails were furl'd.

But when he call'd on Sally Brown,
 To see how she went on,
 He found she'd got another Ben,
 Whose Christian-name was John.

'O Sally Brown, O Sally Brown,
How could you serve me so ?
I've met with many a breeze before,
But never such a blow :'

Then reading on his 'bacco box
He heaved a bitter sigh,
And then began to eye his pipe,
And then to pipe his eye.

And then he tried to sing 'All's Well,'
But could not though he tried ;
His head was turn'd, and so he chew'd
His pigtail till he died.

His death, which happen'd in his berth,
At forty-odd befell :
They went and told the sexton, and
The sexton toll'd the bell.

FAITHLESS NELLY GRAY

A PATHETIC BALLAD

BEN BATTLE was a soldier bold,
And used to war's alarms :
But a cannon-ball took off his legs,
So he laid down his arms !

Now as they bore him off the field,
Said he, 'Let others shoot,
For here I leave my second leg,
And the Forty-second Foot !'

The army-surgeons made him limbs :
Said he,—'They're only pegs :
But there's as wooden members quite
As represent my legs !'

Now Ben he loved a pretty maid,
Her name was Nelly Gray ;
So he went to pay her his devours
When he'd devoured his pay !

But when he called on Nelly Gray,
She made him quite a scoff;
And when she saw his wooden legs,
Began to take them off!

'O Nelly Gray! O, Nelly Gray!
Is this your love so warm?
The love that loves a scarlet coat
Should be more uniform!'

Said she, 'I loved a soldier once,
For he was blythe and brave;
But I will never have a man
With both legs in the grave!

'Before you had those timber toes,
Your love I did allow,
But then, you know, you stand upon
Another footing now!'

'O, Nelly Gray! O, Nelly Gray!
For all your jeering speeches,
At duty's call, I left my legs
In Badajos's *breaches*!'

'Why, then,' said she, 'you've lost the feet
Of legs in wars alarms,
And now you cannot wear your shoes
Upon your feats of arms!'

'O, false and fickle Nelly Gray;
I know why you refuse:—
Though I've no feet—some other man
Is standing in my shoes!

'I wish I ne'er had seen your face;
But, now, a long farewell!
For you will be my death;—alas!
You will not be my *Nell*!'

Now when he went from Nelly Gray,
His heart so heavy got—
And life was such a burthen grown,
It made him take a knot!

So round his melancholy neck,
A rope he did entwine,
And, for his second time in life,
Enlisted in the Line !

One end he tied around a beam,
And then removed his pegs,
And, as his legs were off,—of course,
He soon was off his legs !

And there he hung, till he was dead
As any nail in town,—
For though distress had cut him up,
It could not cut him down !

A dozen men sat on his corpse,
To find out why he died—
And they buried Ben in four cross-roads,
With a *stake* in his inside !

A WATERLOO BALLAD

To Waterloo, with sad ado,
And many a sigh and groan,
Amongst the dead, came Patty Head
To look for Peter Stone.

‘O prithee tell, good sentinel,
If I shall find him here ?
I’m come to weep upon his corse,
My Ninety-Second dear !

‘Into our town a serjeant came,
With ribands all so fine
A-flaunting in his cap—alas !
His bow enlisted mine !

‘They taught him how to turn his toes,
And stand as stiff as starch ;
I thought that it was love and May,
But it was love and March !

'A sorry March indeed to leave
The friends he might have kep',—
No March of Intellect it was,
But quite a foolish step.

'O prithee tell, good sentinel,
If hereabout he lies ?
I want a corpse with reddish hair,
And very sweet blue eyes.'

Her sorrow on the sentinel
Appear'd to deeply strike :
'Walk in,' he said, 'among the dead,
And pick out which you like.'

And soon she pick'd out Peter Stone,
Half turned into a corse ;
A cannon was his bolster, and
His matrass was a horse.

'O Peter Stone, O Peter Stone,
Lord, here has been a skirmage !
What have they done to your poor breast,
That used to hold my image ?'

'O Patty Head, O Patty Head,
You're come to my last kissing ;
Before I'm set in the Gazette
As wounded, dead, and missing.

'Alas ! a splinter of a shell
Right in my stomach sticks ;
French mortars don't agree so well
With stomachs as French bricks.

'This very night a merry dance
At Brussels was to be ;—
Instead of opening a ball,
A ball has open'd me.

'Its billet every bullet has,
And well does it fulfil it ;—
I wish mine hadn't come so straight,
But been a "crooked billet."

- ' And then there came a cuirassier
And cut me on the chest ;—
He had no pity in his heart,
For he had *steel'd his breast*.
- ' Next thing a lancer, with his lance
Began to thrust away ;
I call'd for quarter, but, alas !
It was not Quarter-day.
- ' He ran his spear right through my arm,
Just here above the joint :—
O Patty dear, it was no joke,
Although it had a point.
- ' With loss of blood I fainted off
As dead as women do—
But soon by charging over me,
The *Coldstreams* brought me to.
- ' With kicks and cuts, and balls and blows,
I throb and ache all over ;
I'm quite convinc'd the field of Mars
Is not a field of clover !
- ' O why did I a soldier turn,
For any royal Guelph ?
I might have been a butcher, and
In business for myself !
- ' O why did I the bounty take ?
(And here he gasp'd for breath)
My shillingsworth of 'list is nail'd
Upon the door of death.
- ' Without a coffin I shall lie,
And sleep my sleep eternal :
Not ev'n a *shell*—my only chance
Of being made a *Kernel* !
- ' O Patty dear, our wedding bells,
Will never ring at Chester !
Here I must lie in Honour's bed,
That isn't worth a *tester* !

'Farewell, my regimental mates,
With whom I used to dress!
My corps is changed, so I am now,
In quite another mess.

'Farewell, my Patty dear, I have
No dying consolations,
Except, when I am dead, you'll go
And see th' Illuminations.'

MARY'S GHOST

A PATHETIC BALLAD

'Twas in the middle of the night,
To sleep young William tried,
When Mary's ghost came stealing in,
And stood at his bed-side.

O William dear! O William dear!
My rest eternal ceases;
Alas! my everlasting peace
Is broken into pieces.

I thought the last of all my cares
Would end with my last minute;
But tho' I went to my long home,
I didn't stay long in it.

The body-snatchers they have come,
And made a snatch at me;
It's very hard them kind of men
Won't let a body be!

You thought that I was buried deep
Quite decent like and chary,
But from her grave in Mary-bone
They've come and boned your Mary.

The arm that used to take your arm
Is took to Dr. Vyse;
And both my legs are gone to walk
The hospital at Guy's.

I vow'd that you should have my hand,
But fate gives us denial;
You'll find it there, at Dr. Bell's,
In spirits and a phial.

As for my feet, the little feet
You used to call so pretty,
There's one, I know, in Bedford Row,
The t'other's in the city.

I can't tell where my head is gone,
But Doctor Carpue can:
As for my trunk, it's all pack'd up
To go by Pickford's van.

I wish you'd go to Mr. P.
And save me such a ride;
I don't half like the outside place,
They've took for my inside.

The cock it crows—I must begone!
My William we must part!
But I'll be yours in death, altho'
Sir Astley has my heart.

Don't go to weep upon my grave,
And think that there I be;
They haven't left an atom there
Of my anatomie.

TIM TURPIN

A PATHETIC BALLAD

TIM TURPIN he was gravel blind,
And ne'er had seen the skies:
For Nature, when his head was made,
Forgot to dot his eyes.

So, like a Christmas pedagogue,
Poor Tim was foro'd to do—
Look out for pupils, for he had
A vacancy for two.

There 's some have specs to help their sight
Of objects dim and small :
But Tim had *specks* within his eyes,
And could not see at all.

Now Tim he woo'd a servant-maid,
And took her to his arms ;
For he, like Pyramus, had cast
A wall-eye on her charms.

By day she led him up and down
Where'er he wish'd to jog,
A happy wife, altho' she led
The life of any dog.

But just when Tim had liv'd a month
In honey with his wife,
A surgeon ope'd his Milton eyes,
Like oysters, with a knife.

But when his eyes were open'd thus,
He wish'd them dark again :
For when he look'd upon his wife,
He saw her very plain.

Her face was bad, her figure worse,
He couldn't bear to eat :
For she was any thing but like
A Grace before his meat.

Now Tim he was a feeling man :
For when his sight was thick,
It made him feel for everything,—
But that was with a stick.

So with a cudgel in his hand—
It was not light or slim—
He knocked at his wife's head until
It open'd unto him.

And when the corpse was stiff and cold,
He took his slaughter'd spouse,
And laid her in a heap with all
The ashes of her house.

But, like a wicked murderer,
He liv'd in constant fear
From day to day, and so he cut
His throat from ear to ear.

The neighbours fetch'd a doctor in :
Said he, this wound I dread
Can hardly be sew'd up—his life
Is hanging on a thread.

But when another week was gone,
He gave him stronger hope—
Instead of hanging on a thread,
Of hanging on a rope.

Ah ! when he hid his bloody work
In ashes round about,
How little he supposed the truth
Would soon be sifted out.

But when the parish dustman came,
His rubbish to withdraw,
He found more dust within the heap
Than he contracted for !

A dozen men to try the fact,
Were sworn that very day ;
But though they all were jurors, yet
No conjurors were they.

Said Tim unto those jurymen,
You need not waste your breath,
For I confess myself at once
The author of her death.

And, oh ! when I reflect upon
The blood that I have spilt,
Just like a button is my soul,
Inscrib'd with double *guilt* !

Then turning round his head again,
He saw before his eyes,
A great judge, and a little judge,
The judges of a-size !

The great judge took his judgment cap,
And put it on his head,
And sentenc'd Tim by law to hang
'Till he was three times dead.

So he was tried, and he was hung
(Fit punishment for such)
On Horsham-drop, and none can say
It was a drop too much.

JOHN TROT

A BALLAD

JOHN TROT he was as tall a lad
As York did ever rear—
As his dear Granny used to say,
He'd make a grenadier.

A serjeant soon came down to York,
With ribbons and a frill;
My lads, said he, let broadcast be,
And come away to drill.

But when he wanted John to 'list,
In war he saw no fun,
Where what is called a raw recruit
Gets often over-done.

Let others carry guns, said he,
And go to war's alarms,
But I have got a shoulder-knot
Impos'd upon my arms.

For John he had a footman's place
To wait on Lady Wye—
She was a dumpy woman, tho'
Her family was high.

Now when two years had past away,
Her Lord took very ill,
And left her to her widowhood,
Of course more dumpy still.

Said John, I am a proper man,
And very tall to see ;
Who knows, but now her Lord is low,
She may look up to me ?

A cunning woman told me once,
Such fortune would turn up ;
She was a kind of sorceress,
But studied in a cup !

So he walked up to Lady Wye,
And took her quite amaz'd,—
She thought, tho' John was tall enough,
He wanted to be rais'd.

But John—for why ? she was a damo
Of such a dwarfish sort—
Had only come to bid her make
Her mourning very short.

Said he, your Lord is dead and cold,
You only cry in vain ;
Not all the Cries of London now
Could call him back again !

You'll soon have many a noble beau,
To dry your noble tears—
But just consider this, that I
Have follow'd you for years.

And tho' you are above me far,
What matters high degree,
When you are only four foot nine,
And I am six foot three !

For tho' you are of lofty race,
And I'm a low-born elf ;
Yet none among your friends could say,
You match'd beneath yourself.

Said she, such insolence as this
Can be no common case ;
Tho' you are in my service, sir,
Your love is out of place.

O Lady Wye ! O Lady Wye !

Consider what you do ;
How can you be so short with me,
I am not so with you !

Then ringing for her serving men,
They show'd him to the door :
Said they, you turn out better now,
Why didn't you before ?

They stripp'd his coat, and gave him kicks
For all his wages due ;
And off, instead of green and gold,
He went in black and blue.

No family would take him in,
Because of his discharge ;
So he made up his mind to servo
The country all at large.

Huzza ! the Serjeant cried, and put
The money in his hand,
And with a shilling cut him off
From his paternal land.

For when his regiment went to fight
At Saragossa town,
A Frenchman thought he look'd too tall
And so he cut him down !

THE POACHER

A SERIOUS BALLAD

'But a bold pheasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed can never be supplied.'—*Goldsmith.*

BILL BLOSSOM was a nice young man,
And drove the Bury coach ;
But bad companions were his bane,
And egg'd him on to poach.

They taught him how to net the birds,
And how to noose the hare;
And with a wiry terrier,
He often set a snare.

Each 'shiny night' the moon was bright,
To park, preserve, and wood
He went, and kept the game alive,
By killing all he could.

Land-owners, who had rabbits, swore
That he had this demerit—
Give him an inch of warren, he
Would take a yard of ferret.

At partridges he was not nice;
And many, large and small,
Without Hall's powder, without lead,
Were sent to Leaden-Hall.

He did not fear to take a deer
From forest, park, or lawn;
And without courting lord or duke
Used frequently to *fawn*.

Folks who had hares discovered snares—
His course they could not stop:
No barber he, and yet he made
Their hares a perfect crop.

To pheasant he was such a foe,
He tried the keepers' nerves;
They swore he never seem'd to have
Jam satis of preserves.

The Shooter went to beat, and found
No sporting worth a pin,
Unless he tried the *covers* made
Of silver, plate, or tin.

In Kent the game was little worth,
In Surrey not a button;
The Speaker said he often tried
The *Manors* about *Sutton*.

No county from his tricks was safe ;
In each he tried his lucks,
And when the keepers were in *Beds*
He often was at *Bucks*.

And when he went to *Bucks*, alas !
They always came to *Herts* ;
And even *Oxon* used to wish
That he had his deserts.

But going to his usual *Hants*,
Old *Cheshire* laid his plots :
He got entrapp'd by legal *Berks*,
And lost his life in *Notts*.

BEN BLUFF

A PATHETIC BALLAD

'Pshaw, you are not on a whaling voyage, where everything that offers is game.'—*The Pilot*.

BEN BLUFF was a whaler, and many a day
Had chased the huge fish about Baffin's old Bay ;
But time brought a change his division to spoil,
And that was when Gas took the shine out of Oil.

He turn'd up his nose at the fumes of the coke,
And swore the whole scheme was a bottle of smoke :
As to London he briefly delivered his mind,
'Sparm-city,' said he—but the City declined.

So Ben cut his line in a sort of a huff,
As soon as his Whales had brought profits enough,
And hard by the Docks settled down for his life,
But, true to his text, went to Wales for a wife.

A big one she was, without figure or waist,
More bulky than lovely, but that was his taste ;
In fat she was lapp'd from her sole to her crown,
And, turned into oil would have lighted a town.

But Ben like a Whaler was charm'd with the match,
And thought, very truly, his spouse a great catch ;
A flesh-and-blood emblem of Plenty and Peace,
And would not have changed her for Helen of Greec.

For Greenland was green in his memory still ;
He'd quitted his trade, but retain'd the good-will ;
And often when soften'd by bumbo and flip,
Would cry—till he blubber'd—about his old ship.

No craft like the Grampus could work through a floe,
What knots she could run, and what tons she could stow,
And then that rich smell he preferr'd to the rose,
By just nosing the whole without holding his nose !

Now Ben he resolved one fine Saturday night,
A snug Arctic Circle of friends to invite,
Old Tars in the trade, who related old tales,
And drank, and blew clouds that were 'very like
whales.'

Of course with their grog there was plenty of chat
Of canting, and flinching, and cutting up fat ;
And how Gun Harpoons into fashion had got,
And if they were meant for the Gun-whale or not ?

At last they retired, and left Ben to his rest,
By fancies cetaceous, and drink, well possess'd,
When, lo ! as he lay by his partner in bed,
He heard something blow through two holes in its head.

'A start !' muttered Ben, in the Grampus afloat,
And made but one jump from the deck to the boat !
'Huzza ! pull away for the blubber and bone—
I look on that whale as already my own !'

Then groping about by the light of the moon,
He soon laid his hand on his trusty harpoon ;
A moment he poised it, to send it more pat,
And then made a plunge to imbed it in fat !

'Starn all !' he sang out, 'as you care for your lives—
Starn all, as you hope to return to your wives—
Stand by for the flurry ! she throws up the foam !
Well done, my old iron, I've sent you right home !'

And scarce had he spoken when lo ! bolt upright
The Leviathan rose in a great sheet of white,
And swiftly advanced for a fathom or two,
As only a fish out of water could do.

'Starn all !' echoed Ben, with a movement aback,
But too slow to escape from the creature's attack ;
If flippers it had, they were furnish'd with nails,—
'You willin, I'll teach you that Women an't Whales !'

'Avast !' shouted Ben, with a sort of a screech,
'I've heard a Whale spouting, but *here* is a speech !'
'A-spouting, indeed !—very pretty,' said she ;
'But it's you I'll blow up, not the froth of the sea !

'To go to pretend to take *me* for a fish !
You great Polar Bear—but I know what you wish—
You're sick of a wife, that you hankering baulks—
You want to go back to some young Esquimaux !'

'O dearest,' cried Ben, frighten'd out of his life,
'Don't think I would go for to murder a wife
I must long have bewail'd'—But she only cried 'Stuff !
Don't name, it you brute, you've *be-whaled* me enough !'

'Lord, Polly,' said Ben, 'such a deed could I do ?
I'd rather have murder'd all Wapping than you !
Come, forgive what is passed,' 'O you monster !' she
cried,

'It was none of your fault that it passed of one side !'

However, at last she inclined to forgive :

'But, Ben, take this warning as long as you live—
If the love of harpooning so strong must prevail,
Take a whale for a wife, not a wife for a whale.'

LIEUTENANT LUFF

ALL you that are too fond of Wine,
Or any other stuff,
Take warning by the dismal fate
Of one Lieutenant Luff.

A sober man he might have been,
Except in one regard,
He did not like *soft* water,
So he took to *drinking hard*!

Said he, 'Let others fancy slops,
And talk in praise of Tea,
But I am no *Bohemian*,
So do not like *Bohea*.
If Wine's a poison, so is Tea,
Tho' in another shape:
What matter whether one is kill'd
By *canister* or *grape*!'

According to this kind of taste
Did he indulge his drouth,
And being fond of *Port*, he made
A *port-hole* of his mouth!
A single pint he might have sipp'd
And not been out of sorts,
In geologic phrase—the rock
He split upon was *quarts*!

To 'hold the mirror up to vico'
With him was hard, alas!
The worse for wine he often was,
But not 'before a glass'!
No kind and prudent friend he had
To bid him drink no more,—
The only *chequers* in his course
Were at a tavern door!

Full soon the sad effects of this
His frame began to show,—
For that old enemy the gout
Had taken him in *toe*!
And joined with this an evil came
Of quite another sort,—
For while he drank, himself, his purse
Was getting '*something short*.'

For want of cash he soon had pawn'd
 One half that he possess'd,
 And drinking show'd him *duplicates*
 Beforehand of the rest!
 So now his Creditors resolved
 To seize on his assets,—
 For why—they found that his *half-pay*
 Did not *half pay* his debts.
 But Luff contriv'd a novel mode
 His Creditors to chouse;
 For his own *execution* he
 Put into his own house!
 A pistol to the muzzle charg'd
 He took devoid of fear;
 Said he, 'This *barrel* is my last,
 So now for my last *bier*!'

Against his lungs he aim'd the slugs,
 And not against his brain,
 So he blew out his *lights*—and none
 Could blow them in again!
 A Jury for a Verdict met,
 And gave it in these terms:—
 'We find as how as certain *slugs*
 Has sent him to the *worms*!'

POMPEY'S GHOST

A PATHETIC BALLAD

'Skins may differ, but affection
 Dwells in white and black the same.'—*Cooper*.

'TWAS twelve o'clock, not twelve at night,
 But twelve o'clock at noon;
 Because the sun was shining bright,
 And not the silver moon.
 A proper time for friends to call,
 Or Pets, or Penny Post;
 When, lo! as Phœbe sat at work,
 She saw her Pompey's Ghost!

Now when a female has a call
From people, that are dead ;
Like Paris ladies, she receives
Her visitors in bed.
But Pompey's Spirit could not come
Like spirits that are white,
Because he was a Blackamoor,
And wouldn't show at night !

But of all unexpected things
That happen to us here,
The most unpleasant is a rise
In what is very dear.
So Phœbe screamed an awful scream,
To prove the seaman's text :
That after black appearances,
White squalls will follow next.

' Oh, Phœbe, dear ! oh, Phœbe, dear !
Don't go to scream or faint ;
You think because I'm black I am
The Devil, but I ain't !
Behind the heels of Lady Lambe
I walked whilst I had breath ;
But that is past, and I am now
A-walking after Death !

' No, murder, though, I come to tell
By base and bloody crime ;
So Phœbe, dear, put off your fits
Till some more fitting time :
No Crowner, like a boatswain's mate,
My body need attack,
With his round dozen to find out
Why I have died so black.

' One Sunday, shortly after tea,
My skin began to burn
As if I had in my inside
A heater, like the urn.

Delirious in the night I grew,
And as I lay in bed,
They say I gather'd all the wool
You see upon my head.

'His Lordship for his doctor sent,
My treatment to begin—
I wish that he had call'd him out,
Before he call'd him in!
For though to physic he was bred,
And pass'd at Surgeons' Hall,
To make his post a sinecure,
He never cured at all!

'The Doctor look'd about my breast,
And then about my back,
And then he shook his head and said,
"Your case looks very black."
And first he sent me hot cayenne,
And then gamboge to swallow,—
But still my Fever would not turn
To Scarlet or to Yellow!

'With madder and with turmeric
He made his next attack;
But neither he nor all his drugs
Could stop my dying black.
At last I got so sick of life,
And sick of being dosed,
One Monday morning I gave up
My physic and the ghost!

'Oh, Phoebe, dear, what pain it was
To sever every tie!
You know black beetles feel as much
As giants when they die—
And if there is a bridal bed,
Or bride of little worth,
It's lying in a bed of mould,
Along with Mother Earth.

' Alas ; some happy, happy day,
In church I hoped to stand,
And like a muff of sable skin
Receive your lily hand ;
But sternly with that piebald match
My fate untimely clashes—
For now, like Pompe-double-i,
I'm sleeping in my ashes !

' And now farewell ! a last farewell !
I'm wanted down below,
And have but time enough to add
One word before I go—
In mourning crape and bombazino
Ne'er spend your precious pelf—
Don't go in black for me,—for I
Can do it for myself.

' Henceforth within my grave I rest,
But Death, who there inherits,
Allowed my spirit leave to come,
You seemed so out of spirits :
But do not sigh, and do not cry,
By grief too much engross'd,—
Nor, for a ghost of colour, turn
The colour of a ghost !

' Again farewell, my Phœbe dear !
Once more a last adieu !
For I must make myself as scarce
As swans of sable hue.'
From black to gray, from gray to nought,
The Shape began to fade,—
And, like an egg, though not so white,
The Ghost was newly laid !

THE MERMAID OF MARGATE

'Alas! what perils do environ.

That man who meddles with a siren!'—*Hudibras*.

ON Margate beach, where the sick one roams,
And the sentimental reads;
Where the maiden flirts, and the widow comes—
Like the ocean—to cast her weeds,—

Where urchins wander to pick up shells
And the Cit to spy at the ships,—
Like the water gala at Sadler's Wells,—
And the Chandler for watery dips;—

There's a maiden sits by the ocean brim,
As lovely and fair as sin!
But woe, deep water and woe to him,
That she snareth like Peter Fin!

Her head is crown'd with pretty sea-wares,
And her locks are golden and loose:
And seek to her feet, like other folks' heirs
To stand, of course, in her shoes!

And, all day long, she combeth them well,
With a sea-shark's prickly jaw;
And her mouth is just like a rose-lipp'd shell,
The fairest that man e'er saw!

And the Fishmonger, humble as love may be,
Hath planted his seat by her side;
'Good even, fair maid! Is thy lover at sea,
To make thee so watch the tide?'

She turn'd about with her pearly brows,
And clasp'd him by the hand:—
'Come, love, with me; I've a bonny house
On the golden Goodwin Sand.'

And then she gave him a siren kiss,
No honeycomb e'er was sweeter;
Poor wretch! how little he dreamt for this
That Peter should be salt-Peter:

And away with her prize to the wave she leapt,
Not walking, as damsels do,
With toe and heel, as she ought to have stept,
But she hopt like a Kangaroo ;

One plunge, and then the victim was blind,
Whilst they galloped across the tide ;
At last, on the bank he waked in his mind,
And the Beauty was by his side.

One half on the sand, and half in the sea,
But his hair began to stiffen ;
For when he look'd where her feet should be,
She had no more feet than Miss Biffen !

But a scaly tail of a dolphin's growth,
In the dabbling brine did soak :
At last she open'd her pearly mouth,
Like an oyster, and thus she spoke :—

‘ You crimpt my father, who was a skate ;—
And my sister you sold—a maid ;
So here remain for a fish'ry fate,
For lost you are, and betray'd ! ’

And away she went, with a seagull's scream,
And a splash of her saucy tail ;
In a moment he lost the silvery gleam
That shone on her splendid mail !

The sun went down with a blood-red flame,
And the sky grew cloudy and black,
And the tumbling billows like leap-frog came,
Each over the other's back !

Ah, me ! it had been a beautiful scene,
With a safe terra-firma round ;
But the green water-hillocks all seem'd to him
Like those in a church-yard ground ;

And Christians love in the turf to lie,
Not in watery graves to be ;
Nay, the very fishes will sooner die
On the land than in the sea.

And whilst he stood, the watery strife
Enorached on every hand,
And the ground decreas'd—his moments of life
Seem'd measur'd, like Time's, by sand ;

And still the waters foam'd in, like ale,
In front, and on either flank,
He knew that Goodwin and Co. must fail,
There was such a run on the bank.

A little more, and a little more,
The surges came tumbling in ;
He sang the evening hymn twice o'er,
And thought of every sin !

Each flounder and plaice lay cold at his heart,
As cold as his marble slab ;
And he thought he felt, in every part,
The pincers of scalded crab !

The squealing lobsters that he had boil'd,
And the little potted shrimps,
All the horny prawns he had ever spoil'd,
Gnawed into his soul, like imps !

And the billows were wandering to and fro,
And the glorious sun was sunk,
And Day, getting black in the face, as though
Of the night-shade she had drunk !

Had there been but a smuggler's cargo adrift,
One tub, or keg, to be seen,
It might have given his spirits a lift
Or an *anker* where *Hope* might lean !

But there was not a box or a beam afloat,
To raft him from that sad place ;
Not a skiff, not a yawl, or a mackarel boat,
Nor a smack upon Neptune's face.

At last, his lingering hopes to buoy,
He saw a sail and a mast,
And called 'Ahoy !'—but it was not a hoy,
And so the vessel went past.

And with saucy wing that flapp'd in his face,
The wild bird about him flew,
With a shrilly scream, that twitted his case,
'Why, thou art a sea-gull too!'

And lo! the tide was over his feet;
Oh! his heart began to freeze,
And slowly to pulse:—in another beat
The wave was up to his knees!

He was deafen'd amidst the mountain-tops,
And the salt spray blinded his eyes,
And wash'd away the other salt-drops
That grief had caused to arise:—

But just as his body was all afloat,
And the surges above him broke,
He was saved from the hungry deep by a boat,
Of Deal—(but builded of oak.)

The skipper gave him a dram, as he lay,
And chafed his shivering skin;
And the Angel return'd that was flying away
With the spirit of Peter Fin!

DEATH'S RAMBLE

ONE day the dreary old King of Death
Inclined for some sport with the carnal,
So he tied a pack of darts on his back,
And quietly stole from his charnel.

His head was bald of flesh and of hair,
His body was lean and lank,
His joints at each stir made a crack, and the cur
Took a gnaw, by the way, at his shank.

And what did he do with his deadly darts,
This goblin of grisly bone?
He dabbled and spill'd man's blood, and he kill'd
Like a butcher that kills his own.

The first he slaughter'd it made him laugh,
(For the man was a coffin-maker),
To think how the mutes, and men in black suits,
Would mourn for an undertaker.

Death saw two Quakers sitting at church,
Quoth he, 'we shall not differ.'
And he let them alone, like figures of stone,
For he could not make them stiffer.

He saw two duellists going to fight,
In fear they could not smother ;
And he shot one through at once—for he knew
They never would shoot each other.

He saw a watchman fast in his box,
And he gave a snore infernal ;
Said Death, ' he may keep his breath, for his sleep
Can never be more eternal.'

He met a coachman driving his coach,
So slow, that his fare grew sick ;
But he let him stray on his tedious way,
For Death only wars on the *quick*.

Death saw a toll-man taking a toll,
In the spirit of his fraternity ;
But he knew that sort of man would extort,
Though summon'd to all eternity.

He found an author writing his life,
But he let him write no further ;
For Death, who strikes whenever he likes,
Is jealous of all self-murder !

Death saw a patient that pull'd out his purse,
And a doctor that took the sum ;
But he let them be—for he knew that the ' fee '
Was a prelude to ' faw ' and ' fum.'

He met a dustman ringing a bell,
And he gave him a mortal thrust ;
For himself, by law, since Adam's flaw,
Is contractor for all our dust.

He saw a sailor mixing his grog,
And he marked him out for slaughter ;
For on water he scarcely had cared for Death,
And never on rum-and-water.

Death saw two players playing at cards,
But the game wasn't worth a dump,
For he quickly laid them flat with a spade,
To wait for the final trump !

JACK HALL

'Tis very hard when men forsake
This melancholy world, and make
A bed of turf, they cannot take
A quiet doze,
But certain rogues will come and break
Their ' bone repose.'

'Tis hard we can't give up our breath,
And to the earth our earth bequeath,
Without Death Fetches after death,
Who thus exhume us ;
And snatch us from our homes beneath
And hearths posthumous.

The tender lover comes to rear
The mournful urn, and shed his tear—
Her glorious dust, he cries, is here !
Alack ! alack !
The while his Sacharissa dear
Is in a sack !

'Tis hard one cannot lie amid
The mould, beneath a coffin-lid,
But thus the Faculty will bid
Their rogues break thro' it !
If they don't want us there, why did
They send us to it ?

One of these sacrilegious knaves,
Who crave as hungry vulture craves,
Behaving as the goul behaves,
 'Neath church-yard wall—
Mayhap because he fed on graves,
 Was nam'd Jack Hall.

By day it was his trade to go
Tending the black coach to and fro;
And sometimes at the door of woe,
 With emblems suitable,
He stood with brother Mute, to show
 That life is mutable.

But long before they passed the ferry,
The dead that he had help'd to bury
He sack'd—(he had a sack to carry
 The bodies off in.)
In fact, he let them have a very
 Short fit of coffin.

Night after night, with crow and spade,
He drove this dead but thriving trade,
Meanwhile his conscience never weigh'd
 A single horsehair;
On corses of all kinds he prey'd,
 A perfect corsair!

At last—it may be, Death took spite
Or jesting only meant to fright—
He sought for Jack night after night
 The churchyards round;
And soon they met, the man and sprite,
 In Pancras' ground.

Jack, by the glimpses of the moon,
Perceiv'd the bony knacker soon,
An awful shape to meet at noon
 Of night and lonely;
But Jack's tough courage did but swoon
 A minute only.

Anon he gave his spade a swing
 Aloft, and kept it brandishing,
 Ready for what mishaps might spring
 From this conjunction;
 Funking indeed was quite a thing
 Beside his function.

‘Hollo!’ cried Death, ‘d’ye wish your sands
 Run out? the stoutest never stands
 A chance with me,—to my commands
 The strongest truckles;
 But I’m your friend—so let’s shake hands,
 I should say—knuckles.’

Jack, glad to see th’ old sprite so sprightly,
 And meaning nothing but uprightly,
 Shook hands at once, and, bowing slightly,
 His mull did proffer:
 But Death, who had no nose, politely
 Declin’d the offer.

Then sitting down upon a bank,
 Leg over leg, shank over shank,
 Like friends for conversation frank,
 That had no check on:
 Quoth Jack unto the Lean and Lank,
 ‘You’re Death, I reckon.’

The Jaw-bone grinn’d:—‘I am that same,
 You’ve hit exactly on my name;
 In truth it has some little fame
 Where burial sod is.’
 Quoth Jack (and wink’d), ‘of course ye came
 Here after bodies.’

Death grinn’d again and shook his head:—
 ‘I’ve little business with the dead;
 When they are fairly sent to bed
 I’ve done my turn:
 Whether or not the worms are fed
 Is your concern.

'My errand here, in meeting' you,
Is nothing but a how-d'ye-do ;
I've done what jobs I had—a few,
 Along this way ;
If I can serve a crony too,
 I beg you'll say.'

Quoth Jack, 'Your Honour's very kind :
And now I call the thing to mind,
This parish very strict I find ;
 But in the next 'un
There lives a very well-inclin'd
 Old sort of sexton.'

Death took the hint, and gave a wink
As well as eyelet holes can blink ;
Then stretching out his arm to link
 The other's arm,—
'Suppose,' says he, 'we have a drink
 Of something warm.'

Jack, nothing loth, with friendly ease
Spoke up at once:—'Why, what ye please ;
Hard by there is the Cheshire Cheese,
 A famous tap.'
But this suggestion seem'd to tease
 The bony chap.

'No, no—your mortal drinks are heady,
And only make my hand unsteady ;
I do not even care for Deady,
 And loathe your rum ;
But I've some glorious brewage ready,
 My drink is—mum !'

And off they set, each right content—
Who knows the dreary way they went ?
But Jack felt rather faint and spent,
 And out of breath ;
At last he saw, quite evident,
 The Door of Death.

All other men had been unmann'd
To see a coffin on each hand,
That served a skeleton to stand

By way of sentry ;
In fact, Death has a very grand
And awful entry.

Throughout his dismal sign prevails,
His name is writ in coffin nails,
The mortal darts make area rails ;
A scull that mocketh,
Grins on the gloomy gate, and quails
Whoever knocketh.

And lo ! on either side arise
Two monstrous pillars—bones of thighs ;
A monumental slab supplies
The step of stone,
Where waiting for his master lies,
A dog of bone.

The dog leapt up, but gave no yell,
The wire was pull'd, but woke no bell,
The ghastly knocker rose and fell,
But caused no riot ;
The ways of Death, we all know well
Are very quiet.

Old Bones stepped in ; Jack stepp'd behind :
Quoth Death, 'I really hope you'll find
The entertainment to your mind,
As I shall treat ye—
A friend or two of goblin kind
I've asked to meet ye.'

And lo ! a crowd of spectres tall,
Like jack-a-lanterns on a wall,
Were standing—every ghastly ball
An eager watcher.

'My friends,' says Death—'friends, Mr. Hall,
The body-snatcher.'

Lord ! what a tumult it produc'd,
When Mr. Hall was introduced !
Jack even, who had long been used
 To frightful things,
Felt just as if his back was sluic'd !
 With freezing springs !

Each goblin face began to make
Some horrid mouth—ape—gorgon—snake ;
And then a spectre-hag would shake
 An airy thigh-bone ;
And cried, (or seem'd to cry,) I'll break
 Your bone, with *my* bone !

Some ground their teeth—some seem'd to spit—
(Nothing, but nothing came of it,)
A hundred awful brows were knit
 In dreadful spite.
Thought Jack—I'm sure I'd better quit.
 Without good-night.

One skip and hop and he was clear,
And running like a hunted deer,
As fleet as people run by fear
 Well spurr'd and whipp'd,
Death, ghosts, and all in that career
 Were quite outstripp'd.

But those who live by death must die ;
Jack's soul at last prepar'd to fly ;
And when his latter end drew nigh,
 Oh ! what a swarm
Of doctors came,—but not to try
 To keep him warm.

No ravens ever scented prey
So early where a dead horse lay,
Nor vultures sniff'd so far away
 A last convulse ;
A dozen 'guests' day after day
 Were 'at his pulse.'

'Twas strange, altho' they got no fees,
How still they watch'd by twos and threes :
But Jack a very little ease
Obtain'd from them ;
In fact, he did not find M.D.'s
Worth one D—M.

The passing bell with hollow toll
Was in his thought—the dreary hole !
Jack gave his eyes a horrid roll,
And then a cough.

' There's something weighing on my soul
I wish was off ;

' All night it roves about my brains,
All day it adds to all my pains,
It is concerning my remains
When I am dead ; '

Twelve wigs and twelve gold-headed canes
Drew near his bed.

' Alas ! ' he sighed, ' I'm sore afraid,
A dozen pangs my heart invade ;
But when I drove a certain trade
In flesh and bone,
There was a little bargain made
About my own.'

Twelve suits of black began to close,
Twelve pair of sleek and sable hose,
Twelve flowing cambric frills in rows,
At once drew round ;
Twelve noses turn'd against his nose,
Twelve snubs profound.

' Ten guineas did not quite suffice,
And so I sold my body twice ;
Twice did not do—I sold it thrice,
Forgive my crimes !
In short I have received its price
A dozen times ! '

Twelve brows got very grim and black,
Twelve wishes stretch'd him on the rack,
Twelve pair of hands for fierce attack

 Took up position,
Ready to share the dying Jack
 By long division.

Twelve angry doctors wrangled so,
That twelve had struck an hour ago,
Before they had an eye to throw

 On the departed;
Twelve heads turn'd round at once, and lo!
 Twelve doctors started.

Whether some comrade of the dead,
Or Satan took it in his head,
To steal the corpse—the corpse had fled!

 'Tis only written,
That '*there was nothing in the bed,*
 But twelve were bitten !'

MORAL REFLECTIONS ON THE CROSS OF ST. PAUL'S

THE man that pays his pence, and goes
Up to thy lofty cross, St. Paul,
Looks over London's naked nose,
Women and men :

 The world is all beneath his ken,
He sits above the *Ball*.
He seems on Mount Olympus' top,
Among the Gods, by Jupiter ! and lets drop
His eyes from the empyreal clouds
On mortal crowds.

Seen from these skies,
How small those emmets in our eyes !
Some carry little sticks—and one
His eggs—to warm them in the sun :
 Dear ! what a hustle,
 And bustle !

And there's my aunt. I know her by her waist,
 So long and thin,
 And so pinch'd in,
 Just in the pismire taste.

Oh! what are men?—Beings so small,
 That, should I fall

Upon their little heads, I must
 Crush them by hundreds into dust!
 And what is life? and all its ages—

There's seven stages!
 Turnham Green! Chelsea! Putney! Fulham!
 Brentford! and Kew!

And Tooting, too!
 And oh! what very little nags to pull 'em.
 Yet each would seem a horse indeed,

If here at Paul's tip-top we'd got 'em;
 Although, like Cinderella's breed,
 They're mice at bottom.

Then let me not despise a horse,
 Though he looks small from Paul's high cross!
 Since he would be,—as near the sky,
 —Fourteen hands high.

What is this world with London in its lap?
 Mogg's Map.

The Thames, that ebbs and flows in its broad
 channel?

A *tidy* kennel.
 The bridges stretching from its banks?

Stone planks.
 Oh me! hence could I read an admonition
 To mad Ambition!

But that he would not listen to my call,
 Though I should stand upon the cross, and *ball*!

‘PLEASE TO RING THE BELLE’

I’LL tell you a story that’s not in Tom Moore:—
Young Love likes to knock at a pretty girl’s door :
So he call’d upon Lucy—’twas just ten o’clock—
Like a spruce single man, with a smart double knock.

Now, a hand-maid, whatever her fingers be at,
Will run like a puss when she hears a *rat-tat* :
So Lucy ran up—and in two seconds more
Had questioned the stranger and answer’d the door.

The meeting was bliss ; but the parting was woe
For the moment will come when such comers must go :
So she kiss’d him, and whisper’d—poor innocent thing—
‘The next time you come, love, pray come with a ring.’

DECEMBER AND MAY

‘Crabbed Age and Youth cannot live together.’—

SHAKSPEARE.

SAID Nestor, to his pretty wife, quite sorrowful one
day,

‘Why, dearest, will you shed in pearls those lovely
eyes away ?

You ought to be more fortified ;’ ‘Ah, brute, be quiet,
do,

I know I’m not so fortyfied, nor fiftyfied, as you !

‘Oh, men are vile deceivers all, as I have ever heard,
You’d die for me you swore, and I—I took you at
your word.

I was a tradesman’s widow then—a pretty change
I’ve made ;

To live, and die the wife of one, a widower by trade !’

‘Come, come, my dear, these flighty airs declare, in
sober truth,

You want as much in age, indeed, as I can want in
youth ;

Besides, you said you liked old men, though now at me
you huff.'

'Why, yes,' she said, 'and so I do—but you're not
old enough!'

'Come, come, my dear, let's make it up, and have
a quiet hive;

I'll be the best of men,—I mean, I'll be the best *alive*!

Your grieving so will kill me, for it cuts me to the
core.'—

'I thank ye, sir, for telling me—for now I'll grieve
the more!'

THE STAG-EYED LADY

A MOORISH TALE

Scheherazade immediately began the following story.

ALI BEN ALI (did you never read

His wond'rous acts that chronicles relate,—
How there was one in pity might exceed

The sack of Troy?) Magnificent he sate
Upon the throne of greatness—great indeed,

For those that he had under him were great—
The horse he rode on, shod with silver nails,
Was a Bashaw—Bashaws have horse's tails.

Ali was cruel—a most cruel one!

'Tis rumour'd he had strangled his own mother—
Howbeit such deeds of darkness he had done,

'Tis thought he would have slain his elder brother
And sister too—but happily that none

Did live within *harm's* length of one another,
Else he had sent the Sun in all its blaze
To endless night, and shorten'd the Moon's days.

Despotic power, that mars a weak man's wit,
And makes a bad man—absolutely bad,
Made Ali wicked—to a fault:—'tis fit
Monarchs should have some check-strings ; but he
had

No curb upon his will—no, not a *bit*—

Wherefore he did not reign well—and full glad
His slaves had been to hang him—but they falter'd,
And let him live unhang'd—and still unalter'd,

Until he got a sage-bush of a beard,

Wherein an Attic owl might roost—a trail
Of bristly hair—that, honour'd and unshear'd,
Grew downward like old women and cow's tail:
Being a sign of age—some grey appear'd,

Mingling with duskier brown its warnings pale ;
But yet not so poetic as when Time
Comes like Jack Frost, and whitens it in rime.

Ben Ali took the hint, and much did vex

His royal bosom that he had no son,
No living child of the more noble sex,

To stand in his Morocco shoes—not one
To make a negro-pollard—or tread necks

When he was gone—doom'd, when his days were
done,

To leave the very city of his fame

Without an Ali to keep up his name.

Therefore he chose a lady for his love,

Singling from out the herd one stag-eyed dear ;
So call'd, because her lustrous eyes, above

All eyes, were dark, and timorous, and clear ;

Then, through his Muftis piously he strove,

And drumm'd with proxy-prayers Mohammed's
ear,

Knowing a boy for certain must come of it,

Or else he was not praying to his *Profit*.

Beer will grow *mothery*, and ladies fair

Will grow like beer ; so did that stag-eyed dame :

Ben Ali hoping for a son and heir,

Boy'd up his hopes, and even chose a name
Of mighty hero that his child should bear ;

He made so certain ere his chicken came :

But oh ! all worldly wit is little worth,

Nor knoweth what to-morrow will bring forth.

To-morrow came, and with to-morrow's sun

A little daughter to this world of sins,—

Miss-fortunes never come alone—so one

Brought on another, like a pair of twins !

Twins ! female twins !—it was enough to stun

Their little wits and scare them from their skins

To hear their father stamp, and curse and swear,

Pulling his beard because he had no heir.

Then strove their stag-eyed mother to calm down

This his paternal rage, and thus address :

' O ! Most Serene ! why dost thou stamp and frown,

And box the compass of the royal chest ?

Ah ! thou wilt mar that portly trunk, I own

I love to gaze on !—Pr'ythee, thou hadst best

Pocket thy fists. Nay, love, if you so thin

Your beard, you'll want a wig upon your chin !'

But not her words, nor e'en her tears, could slack

The quicklime of his rage, that hotter grew ;

He call'd his slaves to bring an ample sack

Wherein a woman might be *poked*—a few

Dark grimly men felt pity and look'd black

At this sad order ; but their slaveships knew

When any dared demur, his sword so bending

Cut off the 'head and front of their offending.'

For Ali had a sword, much like himself,

A crooked blade, guilty of human gore—

The trophies it had lopp'd from many an elf

Were stuck at his *head-quarters* by the score—

Nor yet in peace he laid it on the shelf,

But jested with it, and his wit cut sore ;

So that (as they of Public Houses speak)
He often did his dozen *butts* a week.

Therefore his slaves, with most obedient fears,
Came with the sack the lady to enclose;
In vain from her stag-eyes 'the big round tears
Coursed one another down her innocent nose ;'
In vain her tongue wept sorrow in their ears ;
Though there were some felt willing to oppose,
Yet when their heads came in their heads, that minute,
Though 'twas a piteous *case*, they put her in it.

And when the sack was tied, some two or three
Of these black undertakers slowly brought her
To a kind of Moorish Serpentine ; for she
Was doom'd to, have a *winding sheet of water*.
Then farewell, earth—farewell to the green tree—
Farewell, the sun—the moon—each little daughter !
She's shot from off the shoulders of a black,
Like a bag of Wall's-End from a coalman's back.

The waters oped, and the wide sack full-fill'd
All that the waters oped, as down it fell ;
Then closed the wave, and then the surface rill'd
A ring above her, like a water-knell ;
A moment more, and all its face was still'd,
And not a guilty heave was left to tell
That underneath its calm and blue transparence
A dame lay drowned in her sack, like Clarence.

But Heaven beheld, and awful witness bore,
The moon in black eclipse deceased that night,
Like Desdemona smother'd by the Moor,
The lady's natal star with pale affright
Fainted and fell—and what were stars before,
Turn'd comets as the tale was brought to light :
And all look'd downward on the fatal wave,
And made their own reflections on her grave.

Next night, a head—a little lady head,

Push'd through the waters a most glassy face,
With weedy tresses, thrown apart and spread,

Comb'd by 'live ivory, to show the space
Of a pale forehead, and two eyes that shed

A soft blue mist, breathing a bloomy grace
Over their sleepy lids—and so she rais'd

Her *aqualine* nose above the stream, and gazed.

She oped her lips—lips of a gentle blush,

So pale it seem'd near drowned to a white,—
She oped her lips, and forth there sprang a gush

Of music bubbling through the surface light;
The leaves are motionless, the breezes hush

To listen to the air—and through the night
There come these words of a most plaintive ditty,
Sobbing as they would break all hearts with pity:

THE WATER PERI'S SONG

Farewell, farewell, to my mother's own daughter,

The child that she wet-nursed is lapp'd in the wave;

The *Mussul*-man coming to fish in this water,

Adds a tear to the flood that weeps over her grave.

This sack is her coffin, this water's her bier,

This greyish *bath* cloak is her funeral pall;

And, stranger, O stranger! this song that you hear

Is her epitaph, elegy, dirges, and all!

Farewell, farewell, to the child of Al Hassan,

My mother's own daughter—the last of her race—

She's a corpse, the poor body! and lies in this basin,

And sleeps in the water that washes her face.

A SAILOR'S APOLOGY FOR BOW-LEGS

THERE's some is born with their straight legs by natur—
 And some is born with bow-legs from the first—
 And some that should have grow'd a good deal straighter,
 But they were badly nurs'd,
 And set, you see, like Bacchus, with their pegs
 Astride of casks and kegs:
 I've got myself a sort of bow to larboard
 And starboard,
 And this is what it was that warp'd my legs:

 'Twas all along of Poll, as I may say,
 That foul'd my cable when I ought to slip;
 But on the tenth of May,
 When I gets under weigh,
 Down there in Hartfordshire, to join my ship,
 I sees the mail
 Get under sail,
 The only one there was to make the trip.
 Well,—I gives chase,
 But as she run
 Two knots to one,
 There warn't no use in keeping on the race!

 Well—casting round about, what next to try on;
 And how to spin,
 I spies an ensign with a Bloody Lion,
 And bears away to leeward for the inn,
 Beats round the gable,
 And fetches up before the coach-horse stable:
 Well, there they stand, four kickers in a row,
 And so
 I just makes free to cut a brown 'un's cable.
 But riding isn't in a seaman's natur—
 So I whips out a toughish end of yarn,
 And gets a kind of sort of a land-waiter
 To splice me, heel to heel,
 Under the she-mare's keel,
 And off I goes, and leaves the inn a-starn!

My eyes ! how she did pitch !
 And wouldn't keep her own to go in no line,
 Tho' I kept bowsing, bowsing at her bow-line,
 But always making lee-way to the ditch,
 And yaw'd her head about all sorts of ways.

The devil sink the craft !
 And wasn't she trimendus slack in stays !
 We couldn't, no how, keep the inn abaft !

Well—I suppose
 We hadn't run a knot—or much beyond—
 (What will you have on it ?)—but off she goes,
 Up to her bends in a fresh water pond !

There I am ! all a-back !
 So I looks forward for her bridle-gears,
 To heave her head round on the t'other tack ;

But when I starts,
 The leather parts,
 And goes away right over by the ears !

What could a fellow do,
 Whose legs, like mine, you know, were in the bilboes,
 But trim myself upright for bringing-to,
 And square his yard-arms and brace up his elbows,

In rig all snug and clever,
 Just while his craft was taking in her water ?
 I didn't like my berth though, howsomdever,
 Because the yarn, you see, kept getting tauter,—
 Says I—I wish this job was rayther shorter !

The chase had gain'd a mile
 A-head, and still the she-mare stood a-drinking :

Now, all the while
 Her body didn't take of course to shrinking.
 Says I, she's letting out her reefs, I'm thinking—

And so she swell'd and swell'd,
 And yet the tackle held,
 'Till both my legs began to bend like winkin.
 My eyes ! but she took in enough to founder !
 And there's my timbers straining every bit,

Ready to split,
 And her tarnation hull a-growing rounder !

Well there—off Hartford Ness,
 We lay both lash'd and water-logg'd together,
 And can't contrive a signal of distress;
 Thinks I, we must ride out this here foul weather,
 Tho' sick of riding out—and nothing less;
 When, looking round, I sees a man a-starn:—
 Hollo! says I, come underneath her quarter!—
 And hands him out my knife to cut the yarn.
 So I gets off, and lands upon the road,
 And leaves the she-mare to her own concern,
 A-standing by the water.
 If I get on another, I'll be blow'd!
 And that's the way, you see, my legs got bow'd!

THE WEE MAN

A ROMANCE

It was a merry company,
 And they were just afloat,
 When lo! a man of dwarfish span
 Came up and hail'd the boat.
 'Good morrow to ye, gentle folks,
 And will you let me in?—
 A slender space will serve my case,
 For I am small and thin.'
 They saw he was a dwarfish man,
 And very small and thin;
 Not seven such would matter much,
 And so they took him in.
 They laugh'd to see his little hat,
 With such a narrow brim;
 They laugh'd to note his dapper coat,
 With skirts so scant and trim.
 But barely had they gone a mile,
 When, gravely, one and all,
 At once began to think the man
 Was not so very small:

His coat had got a broader skirt,
His hat a broader brim,
His leg grew stout, and soon plump'd out
A very proper limb.

Still on they went, and as they went,
More rough the billows grew,—
And rose and fell, a greater swell,
And he was swelling too!

And lo! where room had been for seven,
For six there scarce was space!
For five!—for four!—for three!—not more
Than two could find a place!

There was not even room for one!
They crowded by degrees—
Aye—closer yet, till elbows met,
And knees were jogging knees.

'Good sir, you must not sit a-stern,
The wave will else come in!'
Without a word he gravely stirr'd,
Another seat to win.

'Good sir, the boat has lost her trim,
You must not sit a-lee!'
With smiling face and courteous grace,
The middle seat took he.

But still, by constant quiet growth,
His back became so wide,
Each neighbour wight, to left and right,
Was thrust against the side.

Lord! how they chided with themselves,
That they had let him in;
To see him grow so monstrous now,
That came so small and thin.

On every brow a dew-drop stood,
They grew so scared and hot,—
'I' the name of all that's great and tall,
Who are ye, sir, and what?'

Loud laugh'd the Gogmagog, a laugh
As loud as giant's roar—
'When first I came, my proper name
Was Little—now I'm *Moore*!'

A REPORT FROM BELOW

'Blow high, blow low.'—*Sea Song.*

As Mister B. and Mistress B.
One night were sitting down to tea,
With toast and muffins hot—
They heard a loud and sudden bounce,
That made the very china flounce,
They could not for a time pronounce
If they were safe or shot—
For Memory brought a deed to match
At Deptford done by night—
Before one eye appeared a Patch
In t'other eye a Blight!

To be belabour'd out of life,
Without some small attempt at strife,
Our nature will not grovel;
One impulse mov'd both man and dame,
He seized the tongs—she did the same,
Leaving the ruffian, if he came,
The poker and the shovel.

Suppose the couple standing so,
When rushing footsteps from below
Made pulses fast and fervent;
And first burst in the frantic cat.
All steaming like a brewer's rat,
And then—as white as my cravat—
Poor Mary May, the servant!

Lord, how the couple's teeth did chatter,
Master and Mistress both flew at her,
'Speak! Fire? or Murder? What's the matter?'

Till Mary getting breath,
Upon her tale began to touch
With rapid tongue, full trotting, such
As if she thought she had too much
To tell before her death:—

‘ We was both, Ma’am, in the wash-house, Ma’am,
a-standing at our tubs,
And Mrs. Round was seconding what little things I
rubs ;
“ Mary,” says she to me, “ I say ”—and there she stops
for coughin’,
“ That dratted copper flue has took to smokin’ very
often,
But please the pigs,”—for that’s her way of swearing
in a passion,
“ I’ll blow it up, and not be set a coughin’ in this
fashion ! ”
Well, down she takes my master’s horn—I mean his
horn for loading,
And empties every grain alive for to set the flue ex-
ploding.
Lawk, Mrs. Round ! says I, and stares, that quantum
is improper,
I’m sartin sure it can’t not take a pound to sky a copper.
You’ll powder both our heads off, so I tells you, with
its puff,
But she only dried her fingers, and she takes a pinch
of snuff.
Well, when the pinch is over—“ Teach your grand-
mother to suck
A powder horn,” says she—Well, says I, I wish you
luck.
Them words set up her back, so with her hands upon
her hips,
“ Come,” says she, quite in a huff, “ come, keep your
tongue inside your lips ;
Afore ever you was born, I was well used to things like
these ;
I shall put it in the grate, and let it burn up by degrees.’

So in it goes, and Bounce—O Lord ! it gives us such
a rattle,
I thought we both were cannonized, like Sogers in
a battle !
Up goes the copper like a squib, and us on both our
backs,
And bless the tubs, they bundled off, and split all into
cracks.
Well, there I fainted dead away, and might have been
cut shorter,
But Providence was kind, and brought me to with
scalding water.
I first looks round for Mrs. Round, and sees her at a
distance,
As stiff as starch, and looked as dead as any thing in
existence ;
All scorched and grimed, and more than that, I see the
copper slap
Right on her head, for all the world like a percussion
copper cap.
Well, I crooks her little fingers, and crumps them well
up together,
As humanity pints out, and burnt her nostrums with
a feather ;
But for all as I can do, to restore her to her mor-
tality,
She never gives a sign of a return to sensuality.
Thinks I, well there she lies, as dead as my own late
departed mother,
Well, she'll wash no more in this world, whatever she
does in t'other.
So I gives myself to scramble up the linens for a minute,
Lawk, sich a shirt ! thinks I, it's well my master
wasn't in it ;
Oh ! I never, never, never, never, never, see a sight so
shockin' ;
Here lays a leg, and there a leg—I mean, you know,
a stocking—
Bodies all slit and torn to rags, and many a tattered
skirt,

And arms burnt off, and sides and backs all scotched
and black with dirt;
But as nobody was in 'em—none but—nobody was
hurt!
Well, there I am, a-scrambling up the things, all in
a lump,
When, mercy on us! such a groan as makes my heart
to jump,
And there she is, a-lying with a crazy sort of eye,
A-staring at the wash-house roof, laid open to the sky;
Then she beckons with a finger, and so down to her
I reaches,
And puts my ear agin her mouth to hear her dying
speeches,
For, poor soul! she has a husband and young orphans,
as I knew;
Well, Ma'am, you wont believe it, but it 's Gospel fact
and true,
But these words is all she whispered—"Why, where
is the powder blew?"

A NOCTURNAL SKETCH

EVEN is come; and from the dark Park, hark,
The signal of the setting sun—one gun!
And six is sounding from the chime, prime time
To go and see the Drury-Lane Dane slain,—
Or hear Othello's jealous doubt spout out,—
Or Macbeth raving at that shade-made blade,
Denying to his frantic clutch much touch;—
Or else to see Ducrow with wide stride ride
Four horses as no other man can span;
Or in the small Olympic Pit, sit split
Laughing at Liston, while you quiz his phiz.
Anon Night comes, and with her wings brings things
Such as, with his poetic tongue, Young sung;
The gas up-blazes with its bright white light,
And paralytic watchmen prowl, howl, growl,
About the streets and take up Pall-Mall Sal,
Who, hasting to her nightly jobs, robs fobs.

Now thieves to enter for your cash, smash, crash,
Past drowsy Charley in a deep sleep, creep,
But frightened by Policeman B. 3, flee,
And while they're going, whisper low, 'No go !'
Now puss, while folks are in their beds, treads leads,
And sleepers waking, grumble—'Drat that cat !'
Who in the gutter caterwauls, squalls, mauls
Some feline foe, and screams in shrill ill-will.

Now Bulls of Bashan, of a prize size, rise
In childish dreams, and with a roar gore poor
Georgy, or Charley, or Billy, willy-nilly ;—
But Nursemaid in a nightmare rest, chest-press'd,
Dreameth of one of her old flames, James Games,
And that she hears—what faith is man's—Ann's banns
And his, from Reverend Mr. Rice, twice, thrice :
White ribbons flourish, and a stout shout out,
That upward goes, shows Rose knows those bows' woes !

DOMESTIC ASIDES ; OR, TRUTH IN PARENTHESES

'I REALLY take it very kind,
This visit, Mrs. Skinner !
I have not seen you such an age—
(The wretch has come to dinner !)

'Your daughters, too, what loves of girls—
What heads for painters' easels !
Come here and kiss the infant, dears,—
(And give it p'rhaps the measles !)

'Your charming boys I see are home
From Reverend Mr. Russel's ;
'Twas very kind to bring them both,—
(What boots for my new Brussels !)

'What ! little Clara left at home ?
Well now I call that shabby :
I should have lov'd to kiss her so,—
(A flabby, dabby, babby !)

'And Mr. S., I hope he's well,
Ah! though he lives so handy,
He never now drops in to sup,—
(The better for our brandy!)

'Come, take a seat—I long to hear
About Matilda's marriage;
You're come, of course, to spend the day!—
(Thank Heav'n, I hear the carriage!)

'What! must you go? next time I hope
You'll give me longer measure;
Nay—I shall see you down the stairs—
(With most uncommon pleasure!)

'Good-bye! good-bye! remember all
Next time you'll take your dinners!
(Now, David, mind I'm not at home
In future to the Skinners!)

THE LOST HEIR

'O where, and oh where
Is my bonny laddie gone?'—*Old Song.*

ONE day, as I was going by
That part of Holborn christened High,
I heard a loud and sudden cry,
That chill'd my very blood;
And lo! from out a dirty alley,
Where pigs and Irish wont to rally,
I saw a crazy woman sally,
Bedaub'd with grease and mud.
She turn'd her East, she turn'd her West,
Staring like Pythoness possesst,
With streaming hair and heaving breast,
As one stark mad with grief.
This way and that she wildly ran,
Jostling with woman and with man—
Her right hand held a frying pan,
The left a lump of beef.
At last her frenzy seem'd to reach
A point just capable of speech,

And with a tone almost a screech,
As wild as ocean bird's,
Or female Ranter mov'd to preach,
She gave her 'sorrow words.'

'O Lord ! O dear, my heart will break, I shall go stick
stark staring wild !

Has ever a one seen any thing about the streets like
a crying lost-looking child ?

Lawk help me, I don't know where to look, or to run, if
I only knew which way—

A Child as is lost about London streets, and especially
Seven Dials, is a needle in a bottle of hay.

I am all in a quiver—get out of my sight, do, you wretch,
you little Kitty M'Nab !

You promised to have half an eye to him, you know
you did, you dirty deceitful young drab.

The last time as ever I see him, poor thing, was with
my own blessed Motherly eyes,

Sitting as good as gold in the gutter, a playing at making
little dirt pies.

I wonder he left the court where he was better off than
all the other young boys,

With two bricks, an old shoe, nine oyster-shells, and
a dead kitten by way of toys.

When his Father comes homes, and he always comes
home as sure as ever the clock strikes one,

He'll be rampant, he will, at his child being lost ; and
the beef and the inguns not done !

La bless you, good folks, mind your own consarns, and
don't be making a mob in the street ;

O serjeant M'Farlane ! you have not come across my
poor little boy, have you, in your beat ?

Do, good people, move on ! don't stand staring at me
like a parcel of stupid stuck pigs ;

Saints forbid ! but he's p'r'aps been inviggled away
up a court for the sake of his clothes by the prigs ;

He'd a very good jacket, for certain, for I bought it
myself for a shilling one day in Rag Fair ;

And his trowsers considering not very much patch'd,
and red plush, they was once his Father's best pair.

His shirt, it's very lucky I'd got washing in the tub, or
that might have gone with the rest ;
But he'd got on a very good pinafore with only two
slits and a burn on the breast.
He'd a goodish sort of hat, if the crown was sew'd in, and
not quite so much jagg'd at the brim,
With one shoe on, and the other shoe is a boot, and not
a fit, and, you'll know by that if it's him.
Except being so well dress'd, my mind would misgive,
some old beggar woman in want of an orphan,
Had borrow'd the child to go a begging with, but I'd
rather see him laid out in his coffin !
Do, good people, move on, such a rabble of boys ! I'll
break every bone of 'em I come near,
Go home—you're spilling the porter—go home—Tommy
Jones, go along home with your beer.
This day is the sorrowfullest day of my life, ever since
my name was Betty Morgan,
Them vile Savoyards ! they lost him once before all
along of following a Monkey and an Organ :
O my Billy—my head will turn right round—if he's
got kiddynapp'd with them Italians,
They'll make him a plaster parish image boy, they will
the outlandish tatterdemalions.
Billy—where are you Billy ?—I'm as hoarse as a crow
with screaming for ye, you young sorrow !
And shan't have half a voice, no more I shan't, for
crying fresh herrings to-morrow.
O Billy, you're bursting my heart in two, and my life
won't be of no more vally,
If I'm to see other folk's darlins, and none of mine
playing like angels in our alley,
And what shall I do but cry out my eyes, when I looks
at the old three-legged chair,
As Billy used to make coaches and horses of, and there
a'n't no Billy there !
I would run all the wide world over to find him, if I only
know'd where to run,
Little Murphy, now I remember, was once lost for a
month through stealing a penny bun,—

The Lord forbid of any child of mine ! I think it would
kill me raily,
To find my Bill holdin' up his little innocent hand at
the Old Bailey.
For though I say it as oughtn't, yet I will say, you may
search for miles and mileses
And not find one better brought up, and more pretty
behaved, from one end to t'other of St. Giles's.
And if I called him a beauty, it's no lie, but only as
a Mother ought to speak ;
You never set eyes on a more handsomer face, only it
hasn't been washed for a week ;
As for hair, tho' it's red, it's the most nicest hair when
I've time to just show it the comb ;
I'll owe 'em five pounds, and a blessing besides, as will
only bring him safe and sound home.
He's blue eyes, and not to be call'd a squint, though a
little cast he's certainly got ;
And his nose is still a good un, tho' the bridge is broke,
by his falling on a pewter pint pot ;
He's got the most elegant wide mouth in the world, and
very large teeth for his age ;
And quite as fit as Mrs. Murdockson's child to play
Cupid on the Drury Lane Stage.
And then he has got such dear winning ways—but O
I never never shall see him no more !
O dear ! to think of losing him just after nussing him
back from death's door !
Only the very last month when the windfalls, hang
'em, was at twenty a penny !
And the threepence he'd got by grottoing was spent in
plums, and sixty for a child is too many.
And the Cholera man came and whitewash'd us all and,
drat him, made a seize of our hog.—
It's no use to send the Crier to cry him about, he's such
a blunderin' drunken old dog ;
The last time he was fetched to find a lost child, he was
guzzling with his bell at the Crown,
And went and cried a boy instead of a girl, for a dis-
tracted Mother and Father about Town.

Billy—where are you, Billy, I say ? come, Billy, come home, to your best of Mothers !

I'm scared when I think of them Cabroleys, they drive so, they'd run over their own Sisters and Brothers.

Or may be he's stole by some chimbly sweeping wretch, to stick fast in narrow flues and what not, And be poked up behind with a picked pointed pole, when the soot has ketch'd, and the chimbly's red hot.

Oh I'd give the whole wide world, if the world was mine, to clap my two longin' eyes on his face,

For he's my darlin of darlins, and if he don't soon come back, you'll see me drop stone dead on the place.

I only wish I'd got him safe in these two Motherly arms, and wouldn't I hug him and kiss him !

Lauk ! I never knew what a precious he was—but a child dont feel like a child till you miss him.

Why, there he is ! Punch and Judy hunting, the young wretch, it's that Billy as sartin as sin !

But let me get him home, with a good grip of his hair, and I'm blest if he shall have a whole bone in his skin !'

THE DROWNING DUCKS

AMONGST the sights that Mrs. Bond

Enjoy'd yet grieved at more than others,
Were little ducklings in a pond,

Swimming about beside their mothers—
Small things like living waterlilies,
But yellow as the daffo-dillies.

'It's very hard,' she used to moan,

'That other people have their ducklings
To grace their waters—mine alone

Have never any pretty chucklings.'

For why !—each little yellow navy
Went down—all downy—to old Davy !

She had a lake—a pond I mean—

Its wave was rather thick than pearly—
She had two ducks, their napes were green—

She had a drake, his tail was curly,—
Yet spite of drake, and ducks, and pond,
No little ducks had Mrs. Bond !

The birds were both the best of mothers—

The nest had eggs—the eggs had luck—
The infant D.'s came forth like others—

But there, alas ! the matter stuck !
They might as well have all died addle,
As die when they began to paddle !

For when, as native instinct taught her,

The mother set her brood afloat,
They sank ere long right under water,
Like any over-loaded boat ;

They were web-footed too to see,
As ducks and spiders ought to be !

No peccant humour in a gander

Brought havoc on her little folks,—
No poaching cook—a frying pander

To appetite,—destroyed their yolks,—
Beneath her very eyes, Od rot 'em !
They went, like plummets, to the bottom.

The thing was strange—a contradiction

It seem'd of nature and her works !
For little ducks, beyond conviction,

Should float without the help of corks :
Great Johnson it bewildered him !
To hear of ducks that could not swim.

Poor Mrs. Bond ! what could she do

But change the breed—and she tried divers
Which dived as all seemed born to do ;

No little ones were e'er survivors—
Like those that copy gems, I'm thinking,
They all were given to die-sinking !

In vain their downy coats were shorn ;
They flounder'd still !—Batch after batch went !
The little fools seemed only born
And hatch'd for nothing but a hatchment !
Whene'er they launched—O sight of wonder !
Like fires the water 'got them under !'

No woman ever gave their lucks
A better chance than Mrs. Bond did ;
At last quite out of heart and ducks,
She gave her pond up, and desponded ;
For Death among the water-lilies,
Cried '*Duc ad me*' to all her dillies !

But though resolved to breed no more,
She brooded often on this riddle—
Alas ! 'twas darker than before !
At last about the summer's middle,
What Johnson, Mrs. Bond, or none did,
To clear the matter up the Sun did !

The thirsty Sirius, dog-like drank
So deep, his furious tongue to cool,
The shallow waters sank and sank,
And lo, from out the wasted pool,
Too hot to hold them any longer,
There crawl'd some eels as big as conger !

I wish all folks would look a bit,
In such a case below the surface ;
But when the eels were caught and split
By Mrs. Bond, just think of *her* face,
In each inside at once to spy
A duckling turn'd to giblet pie !

The sight at once explained the case,
Making the Dame look rather silly,
The tenants of that *Eely Place*
Had found the way to *Pick a dilly*,
And so by under-water suction,
Had wrought the little ducks' abduction.

SALLY SIMPKIN'S LAMENT

OR, JOHN JONES'S KIT-CAT-ASTROPHE

'He left his body to the sea,
And made a shark his legatee.'

Bryan and Perenne.

'Oh! what is that comes gliding in,
And quite in middling haste?
It is the picture of my Jones,
And painted to the waist.

'It is not painted to the life,
For where's the trowsers blue?
Oh Jones, my dear!—Oh dear! my Jones,
What is become of you?'

'Oh! Sally dear, it is too true,—
The half that you remark
Is come to say my other half
Is bit off by a shark!

'Oh! Sally, sharks do things by halves,
Yet most completely do!
A bite in one place seems enough,
But I've been bit in two.

'You know I once was all your own,
But now a shark must share!
But let that pass—for now to you
I'm neither here nor there.

'Alas! death has a strange divorce
Effected in the sea,
It has divided me from you,
And even me from me!

'Don't fear my ghost will walk o' nights
To haunt as people say;
My ghost *can't* walk, for, oh! my legs
Are many leagues away!

'Lord! think when I am swimming round,
And looking where the boat is,
A shark just snaps away a *half*,
Without "a *quarter's* notice."

'One half is here, the other half
Is near Columbia placed;
Oh! Sally, I have got the whole
Atlantic for my waist.

'But now, adieu—a long adieu!
I've solved death's awful riddle,
And would say more, but I am doomed
To break off in the middle.'

A SINGULAR EXHIBITION AT SOMERSET HOUSE

'Our Crummie is a dainty cow.'—*Scotch Song.*

ON that first Saturday in May,
When Lords and Ladies, great and grand,
Repair to see what each R.A.
Has done since last they sought the Strand,
In red, brown, yellow, green, or blue,
In short, what's called the private view,—
Amongst the guests—the deuce knows how
She got in there without a row—
There came a large and vulgar dame
With arms deep red, and face the same,
Showing in temper not a Saint;
No one could guess for why she came,
Unless perchance to 'scour the Paint.'

From wall to wall she forc'd her way,
Elbow'd Lord Durham—pok'd Lord Grey—
Stamp'd Stafford's toes to make him move,
And Devonshire's Duke received a shove;
The great Lord Chancellor felt her nudge,
She made the Vice, his Honour, budge,
And gave a pinch to Park the Judge.

As for the ladies, in this stir,
The highest rank gave way to her.
From number one and number two,
She search'd the pictures through and through,
On benches stood to inspect the high ones,
And squatted down to scan the shy ones ;
And as she went from part to part,
A deeper red each cheek became,
Her very eyes lit up in flame,
That made each looker-on exclaim,
' Really an ardent love of art !'
Alas, amidst her inquisition,
Fate brought her to a sad condition ;
She might have run against Lord Milton,
And still have stared at deeds in oil,
But ah ! her picture-joy to spoil,
She came full butt on Mr. Hilton.

The Keeper mute, with staring eyes
Like a lay-figure for surprise,
At last thus stammered out, ' How now ?
Woman—where, woman, is your ticket,
That ought to let you through our wicket ?'
Says woman, ' Where is David's Cow ?'
Said Mr. H——, with expedition,
' There's no Cow in the Exhibition.'
' No Cow !'—but here her tongue in verity
Set off with steam and rail celerity—
' No Cow ! there an't no Cow, then the more's the
shame and pity,
Hang you and the R.A.'s, and all the Hanging Com-
mittee !
No Cow—but hold your tongue, for you needn't talk
to me—
You can't talk up the Cow, you can't, to where it ought
to be—
I haven't seen a picture high or low, or any how,
Or in any of the rooms, to be compared with David's
Cow !

You may talk of your Landseers, and of your Coopers,
and your Wards,

Why hanging is too good for them, and yet here they
are on cords !

They're only fit for window frames, and shutters, and
street-doors,

David will paint 'em any day at Red Lions or Blue
Boars,—

Why Morland was a fool to him, at a little pig or sow—

It's really hard it an't hung up—I could cry about the
Cow !

But I know well what it is, and why—they're jealous
of David's fame,

But to vent it on the Cow, poor thing, is a cruelty and
a shame.

Do you think it might hang bye and bye, if you cannot
hang it now ?

David has made a party up, to come and see his Cow.

If it only hung three days a week, for an example to
the learners,

Why can't it hang up, turn about, with that picture of
Mr. Turner's ?

Or do you think from Mr. Etty, you need apprehend a row,

If now and then you cut him down to hang up David's
Cow ?

I can't think where their tastes have been, to not have
such a creature,

Although I say, that should not say, it was prettier than
Nature ;

It must be hung—and shall be hung, for, Mr. H——
I vow,

I daren't take home the catalogue, unless it's got the
Cow !

As we only want it to be seen, I should not so much care,

If it was only round the stone man's neck, a-coming
up the stair.

Or down there in the marble room, where all the figures
stand,

Where one of them Three Graces might just hold it in
her hand—

Or may be Bailey's Charity the favour would allow,
It would really be a charity to hang up David's Cow.
We haven't nowhere else to go if you don't hang it here,
The Water-Colour place allows no oilman to appear—
And the British Gallery sticks to Dutch, Teniers, and
Gerrard Douw,

And the Suffolk Gallery will not do—it's not a Suffolk
Cow :

I wish you'd seen him painting her, he hardly took his
meals

Till she was painted on the board correct from head to
heels ;

His heart and soul was in his Cow, and almost made
him shabby,

He hardly whipp'd the boys at all, or help'd to nurse
the babby.

And when he had her all complete and painted over red,
He got so grand, I really thought him going off his head.
Now hang it, Mr. Hilton, do just hang it any how :
Poor David, he will hang himself unless you hang his
Cow.—

And if it's inconvenient and drawn too big by half—
David shan't send next year except a very little calf.'

THE DOUBLE KNOCK

RAT-TAT it went upon the lion's chin,
'That hat, I know it!' cried the joyful girl;

'Summer's it is, I know him by his knock,
Comers like him are welcome as the day!

Lizzy! go down and open the street-door,

Busy I am to any one but *him*.

Know him you must—he has been often here;

Show him up stairs, and tell him I'm alone.'

Quickly the maid went tripping down the stair;

Thickly the heart of Rose Matilda beat;

'Sure he has brought me tickets for the play—

Drury—or Covent Garden—darling man!—

Kemble will play—or Kean who makes the soul
 Tremble ; in Richard or the frenzied Moor—
 Farren, the stay and prop of many a farce
 Barren beside—or Liston, Laughter's Child—
 Kelly the natural, to witness whom
 Jelly is nothing to the public's jam—
 Cooper, the sensible—and Walter Knowles
 Super, in William Tell, now rightly told.
 Better—perchance, from Andrews, brings a box,
 Letter of boxes for the Italian stage—
 Brocard ! Donzelli ! Taglioni ! Paul !
 No card,—thank heaven—engages me to-night !
 Feathers, of course—no turban, and no toque—
 Weather's against it, but I'll go in curls.
 Dearly I dote on white—my satin dress,
 Merely one night—it won't be much the worse—
 Cupid—the New Ballet I long to see—
 Stupid ! why don't she go and ope the door !'

Glisten'd her eye as the impatient girl
 Listen'd, low bending o'er the topmost stair,
 Vainly, alas ! she listens and she bends,
 Plainly she hears this question and reply :
 'Axes your pardon, Sir, but what d'ye want ?'
 'Taxes,' says he, 'and shall not call again !'

LINES TO MARY

(AT NO. 1 NEWGATE, FAVOURED BY MR. WONTNER)

O MARY I believ'd you true,
 And I was blest in so believing ;
 But till this hour I never knew—
 That you were taken up for thieving !

Oh ! when I snatch'd a tender kiss,
 Or some such trifle when I courted,
 You said, indeed, that love was bliss,
 But never owned you were transported !

But then to gaze on that fair face—
 It would have been an unfair feeling,
 To dream that you had pilfered lace—
 And Flints had suffer'd from your stealing !

Or when my suit I first preferr'd,
 To bring your coldness to repentance,
 Before I hammerd' out a word,
 How could I dream you'd heard a sentence !

Or when with all the warmth of youth
 I strove to prove my love no fiction,
 How could I guess I urged a truth
 On one already past conviction !

How could I dream that ivory part,
 Your hand—where I have look'd and linger'd,
 Altho' it stole away my heart,
 Had been held up as one light-finger'd !

In melting verse your charms I drew,
 The charms in which my muse delighted—
 Alas ! the lay, I thought was new,
 Spoke only what had been *indicted* !

Oh ! when that form, a lovely one,
 Hung on the neck its arms had flown to,
 I little thought that you had run
 A chance of hanging on your own too.

You said you pick'd me from the world,
 My vanity it now must shock it—
 And down at once my pride is hurl'd,
 You've pick'd me—and you've pick'd a pocket !

Oh ! when our love had got so far,
 The banns were read by Dr. Daly,
 Who asked if there was any *bar*—
 Why did not some one shout, 'Old Bailey ?'

But when you rob'd your flesh and bones
 In that pure white that angel garb is,
 Who could have thought you, Mary Jones
 Among the Joans that link with *Darbies* ?

And when the parson came to say,
 My goods were yours, if I had got any,
 And you should honour and obey,
 Who could have thought—‘O Bay of Botany!’

But, oh,—the worst of all your slips
 I did not till this day discover—
 That down in Deptford’s prison ships,
 Oh, Mary! you’ve a hulking lover!

OUR VILLAGE.—BY A VILLAGER

‘Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain.’—*Goldsmith*.

OUR village, that’s to say not Miss Mitford’s village,
 but our village of Bullock Smithy,

Is come into by an avenue of trees, three oak pollards,
 two elders, and a withy;

And in the middle, there’s a green of about not exceed-
 ing an acre and a half;

It’s common to all, and fed off by nineteen cows, six
 ponies, three horses, five asses, two foals, seven
 pigs, and a calf!

Besides a pond in the middle, as is held by a similar
 sort of common law lease,

And contains twenty ducks, six drakes, three ganders,
 two dead dogs, four drown’d kittens, and twelve
 geese.

Of course the green’s cropt very close, and does famous
 for bowling when the little village boys play at
 cricket;

Only some horse, or pig, or cow, or great jackass, is
 sure to come and stand right before the wicket.

There’s fifty-five private houses, let alone barns and
 workshops, and pigstyes, and poultry huts, and
 such-like sheds;

With plenty of public-houses—two Foxes, one Green
 Man, three Bunch of Grapes, one Crown, and six
 King’s Heads.

The Green Man is reckon'd the best, as the only one
that for love or money can raise

A postilion, a blue jacket, two deplorable lame white
horses, and a ramshackled 'neat postchaise.'

There's one parish church for all the people, whatso-
ever may be their ranks in life or their de-
grees,

Except one very damp, small, dark, freezing-cold, little
Methodist chapel of Ease ;

And close by the church-yard there's a stone-mason's
yard, that when the time is seasonable

Will furnish with afflictions sore and marble urns and
cherubims very low and reasonable.

There's a cage, comfortable enough ; I've been in it
with old Jack Jeffrey and Tom Pike ;

For the Green Man next door will send you in ale, gin,
or any thing else you like.

I can't speak of the stocks, as nothing remains of them
but the upright post ;

But the pound is kept in repairs for the sake of Cob's
horse, as is always there almost.

There's a smithy of course, where that queer sort of
a chap in his way, Old Joe Bradley,

Perpetually hammers and stammers, for he stutters
and shoes horses very badly.

There's a shop of all sorts, that sells every thing, kept
by the widow of Mr. Task ;

But when you go there it's ten to one she's out of
every thing you ask.

You'll know her house by the swarm of boys, like
flies, about the old sugary cask :

There are six empty houses, and not so well paper'd
inside as out,

For bill-stickers won't beware, but sticks notices of
sales and election placards all about.

That's the Doctor's with a green door, where the gar-
den pots in the windows is seen ;

A weakly monthly rose that don't blow, and a dead
geranium, and a tea-plant with five black leaves
and one green.

As for hollyoaks at the cottage doors, and honey-suckles and jasmines, you may go and whistle ; But the Tailor's front garden grows two cabbages, a dock, a ha'porth of pennyroyal, two dandelions, and a thistle.

There are three small orchards—Mr. Busby's the school-master's is the chief—

With two pear-trees that don't bear ; one plum and an apple, that every year is stripped by a thief.

There's another small day-school too, kept by the respectable Mrs. Gaby.

A select establishment, for six little boys and one big, and four little girls and a baby ;

There's a rectory, with pointed gables and strange odd chimneys that never smokes,

For the rector don't live on his living like other Christian sort of folks ;

There's a barber's, once a-week well filled with rough black-bearded, shock-headed churls,

And a window with two feminine men's heads, and two masculine ladies in false curls ;

There's a butcher's, and a carpenter's, and a plumber's, and a small green-grocer's, and a baker,

But he won't bake on a Sunday, and there's a sexton that's a coal-merchant besides, and an undertaker ;

And a toy-shop, but not a whole one, for a village can't compare with the London shops ;

One window sells drums, dolls, kites, carts, bats, Clout's balls, and the other sells malt and hops.

And Mrs. Brown, in domestic economy not to be a bit behind her betters,

Lets her house to a milliner, a watchmaker, a rat-catcher, a cobbler, lives in it herself, and it's the post-office for letters.

Now I've gone through all the village—ay, from end to end, save and except one more house,

But I haven't come to that—and I hope I never shall—and that's the Village Poor House !

THE CARELESSE NURSE MAYD

I SAWE a Mayd sitte on a Bank,
 Beguiled by Wooer fayne and fond;
 And whiles His flatteryng Vowes She drank,
 Her Nurselynge slipt within a Pond!

All Even Tide they Talkde and Kist,
 For She was fayre and He was Kinde;
 The Sunne went down before She wist
 Another Sonne had sett behinde!

With angrie Hands and frownyng Browe,
 That deemd Her owne the Urchine's Sinne,
 She pluckt Him out, but he was now
 Past being Whipt for fallynge in.

She then beginnes to wayle the Ladde
 With Shrikes that Echo answerde round—
 O! foolishe Mayd to be soe sadde
 The Momente that her Care was drown'd!

THE DUEL

A SERIOUS BALLAD

Like the two Kings of Brentford smelling at one nosegay.'

IN Brentford town, of old renown,
 There lived a Mister Bray,
 Who fell in love with Lucy Bell,
 And so did Mr. Clay.

To see her ride from Hammersmith,
 By all it was allow'd,
 Such fair outsides are seldom seen,
 Such Angels on a Cloud.

Said Mr. Bray to Mr. Clay,
 You choose to rival me,
 And court Miss Bell, but there your court
 No thoroughfare shall be.

Unless you now give up your suit,
You may repent your love ;
I who have shot a pigeon match,
Can shoot a turtle dove.

So pray before you woo her more,
Consider what you do ;
If you pop aught to Lucy Bell,—
I'll pop it into you.

Said Mr. Clay to Mr. Bray,
Your threats I quite explode ;
One who has been a volunteer
Knows how to prime and load.

And so I say to you unless
Your passion quiet keeps,
I who have shot and hit bulls' eyes,
May chance to hit a sheep's.

Now gold is oft for silver changed,
And that for copper red ;
But these two went away to give
Each other change for lead.

But first they sought a friend a-piece,
This pleasant thought to give—
When they were dead, they thus should have
Two seconds still to live.

To measure out the ground not long
The seconds then forebore,
And having taken one rash step,
They took a dozen more.

They next prepared each pistol-pan
Against the deadly strife,
By putting in the prime of death
Against the prime of life.

Now all was ready for the foes,
But when they took their stands,
Fear made them tremble so they found
They both were shaking hands.

Said Mr. C. to Mr. B.,
Here one of us may fall,
And like St. Paul's Cathedral now,
Be doom'd to have a ball.

I do confess I did attach
Misconduct to your name ;
If I withdraw the charge, will then
Your ramrod do the same ?

Said Mr. B., I do agree—
But think of Honour's Courts !
If we go off without a shot,
There will be strange reports.

But look, the morning now is bright,
Though cloudy it begun ;
Why can't we aim above, as if
We had call'd out the sun ?

So up into the harmless air
Their bullets they did send ;
And may all other duels have
That upshot in the end !

THE BOY AT THE NORE

'Alone I did it !—Boy !'—*Coriolanus.*

I SAY, little Boy at the Nore,
Do you come from the small Isle of Man ?
Why, your history a mystery must be,—
Come tell us as much as you can,
Little Boy at the Nore !

You live it seems wholly on water,
Which your Gambier calls living in clover ;—
But how comes it, if that is the case,
You're eternally half seas over,—
Little Boy at the Nore ?

While you ride—while you dance—while you float—
 Never mind your imperfect orthography ;—
 But give us as well as you can,
 Your watery auto-biography,
 Little Boy at the Nore !

LITTLE BOY AT THE NORE LOQUITUR

I'm the tight little Boy at the Nore,
 In a sort of sea negus I dwells ;
 Half and half 'twixt salt water and Port,—
 I'm reckon'ed the first of the swells—
 I'm the Boy at the Nore !

I lives with my toes to the flounders,
 And watches through long days and nights ;
 Yet, cruelly eager, men look—
 To catch the first glimpse of my lights—
 I'm the Boy at the Nore !

I never gets cold in the head,
 So my life on salt water is sweet,—
 I think I owes much of my health
 To being well used to wet feet—
 As the Boy at the Nore.

There's one thing, I'm never in debt :
 Nay !—I liquidates more than I *oughter*¹ ;
 So the man to beat Cits as goes by,
 In keeping the head above water,
 Is the Boy at the Nore.

I've seen a good deal of distress,
 Lots of Breakers in Ocean's Gazette ;
 They should do as I do—rise o'er all ;
 Aye, a good floating capital get,
 Like the Boy at the Nore !

I'm a'ter the sailor's own heart,
 And cheers him, in deep water rolling ;
 And the friend of all friends to Jack Junk,
 Ben Backstay, Tom Pipes, and Tom Bowling,
 Is the Boy at the Nore !

¹ A word caught from some American Trader in passing.

Could I e'er but grow up, I'd be off
 For a week to make love with my wheedles ;
 If the tight little Boy at the Nore
 Could but catch a nice girl at the Needles,
 We'd have *two* at the Nore.

They thinks little of sizes on water,
 On big waves the tiny one skulks,—
 While the river has Men of War on it—
 Yes—the Thames is oppress'd with Great Hulks,
 And the Boy's at the Nore !

But I've done—for the water is heaving
 Round my body as though it would sink it !
 And I've been so long pitching and tossing,
 That sea-sick—you'd hardly now think it—
 Is the Boy at the Nore !

THE SUPPER SUPERSTITION

A PATHETIC BALLAD

'Oh flesh, flesh, how art thou fishified !'—*Mercutio*.

'Twas twelve o'clock by Chelsea chimes,
 When all in hungry trim,
 Good Mister Jupp sat down to sup
 With wife, and Kate, and Jim.

Said he, 'Upon this dainty cod
 How bravely I shall sup'—
 When, whiter than the table-cloth,
 A GHOST came rising up !

'O, father dear, O, mother dear,
 Dear Kate, and brother Jim,—
 You know when some one went to sea,—
 Don't cry—but I am him !

'You hope some day with fond embrace
 To greet your absent Jack,
 But oh, I am come here to say
 I'm never coming back !

' From Alexandria we set sail,
With corn, and oil, and figs,
But steering "too much Sow," we struck
Upon the Sow and Pigs!

' The ship we pump'd till we could see
Old England from the tops;
When down she went with all our hands,
Right in the Channel's Chops.

' Just give a look in Norey's chart,
The very place it tells;
I think it says twelve fathom deep,
Clay bottom, mix'd with shells.

' Well, there we are till "hands aloft,"
We have at last a call;
The pug I had for brother Jim,
Kate's parrot, too, and all.

' But oh, my spirit cannot rest,
In Davy Jones's sod,
Till I've appear'd to you and said,—
Don't sup on that 'ere Cod!

' You live on land, and little think
What passes in the sea;
Last Sunday week, at 2 p.m.,
That Cod was picking me!

' Those oysters, too, that look so plump,
And seem so nicely done,
They put my corpse in many shells,
Instead of only one.

' O, do not eat those oysters then,
And do not touch the shrimps;
When I was in my briny grave,
They suck'd my blood like imps!

' Don't eat what brutes would never eat,
The brutes I used to pat,
They'll know the smell they used to smell,
Just try the dog and cat!'

The Spirit fled—they wept his fate,
And cried, Alack, alack!
At last up started brother Jim,
‘Let’s try if Jack was Jack!’

They call’d the Dog, they call’d the Cat,
And little Kitten too,
And down they put the Cod and sauce,
To see what brutes would do.

Old Tray licked all the oysters up,
Puss never stood at crimps,
But munch’d the Cod—and little Kit
Quite feasted on the shrimps!

The thing was odd, and minus Cod
And sauce, they stood like posts;
O, prudent folks, for fear of hoax,
Put no belief in Ghosts!

A STORM AT HASTINGS

AND THE LITTLE UNKNOWN

’TWAS August—Hastings every day was filling—
Hastings, that ‘greenest spot on memory’s waste!’
With crowds of idlers willing or unwilling
To be bedipped—be noticed—or be braced,
And all things rose a penny in a shilling.
Meanwhile, from window and from door, in haste
‘Accommodation bills’ kept coming down,
Gladding ‘the world of letters’ in that town.

Each day pour’d in new coach-fulls of new cits,
Flying from London smoke and dust annoying,
Unmarried Misses hoping to make hits,
And new-wed couples fresh from Tunbridge toying.
Lacemen and placemen, ministers and wits,
And quakers of both sexes, much enjoying
A morning’s reading by the ocean’s rim,
That sect delighting in the sea’s broad brim.

And lo ! amongst all these appear'd a creature,
So small, he almost might a twin have been
With Miss Crachami—dwarfish quite in stature,
Yet well proportion'd—neither fat nor lean,
His face of marvellously pleasant feature,
So short and sweet a man was never seen—
All thought him charming at the first beginning—
Alas, ere long they found him far too winning !

He seem'd in love with chance—and chance repaid
His ardent passion with her fondest smile,
The sunshine of good luck, without a shade,
He staked and won—and won and staked—the bilo
It stirr'd of many a man and many a maid,
To see at every venture how that vile
Small gambler snatch'd—and how he won them too—
A living Pam, omnipotent at loo !

Miss Wiggins set her heart upon a box,
'Twas handsome, rosewood, and inlaid with brass,
And dreamt three times she garnish'd it with stocks
Of needles, silks, and cottons—but alas !
She lost it wide awake.—We thought Miss Cox
Was lucky—but she saw three caddies pass
To that small imp ;—no living luck could loo him !
Sir Stamford would have lost his Raffles to him !

And so he climb'd—and rode, and won—and walk'd,
The wondrous topic of the curious swarm
That haunted the Parade. Many were balk'd
Of notoriety by that small form
Pacing it up and down :—some even talk'd
Of ducking him—when lo ! a dismal storm
Stepp'd in—one Friday, at the close of day—
And every head was turn'd another way—

Watching the grander guest. It seemed to rise
Bulky and slow upon the southern brink
Of the horizon—fann'd by sultry sighs—
So black and threatening, I cannot think

Of any simile, except the skies
Miss Wiggins sometimes *shades* in Indian ink—
Miss-shapen blotches of such heavy vapour,
They seem a deal more solid than her paper.

As for the sea, it did not fret, and rave,
And tear its waves to tatters, and so dash on
The stony-hearted beach;—some bards would have
It always rampant, in that idle fashion,—
Whereas the waves roll'd in, subdued and grave,
Like schoolboys, when the master's in a passion,
Who meekly settle in and take their places,
With a very quiet awe on all their faces.

Some love to draw the ocean with a head,
Like troubled table-beer,—and make it bounce,
And froth, and roar, and fling,—but this, I've said,
Surged in scarce rougher than a lady's flounce:—
But then, a grander contrast thus it bred
With the wild welkin, seeming to pronounce
Something more awful in the serious ear,
As one would whisper that a lion's near—

Who just begins to roar: so the hoarse thunder
Growl'd long—but low—a prelude note of death,
As if the stifling clouds yet kept it under,
But still it mutter'd to the sea beneath
Such a continued peal, as made us wonder
It did not pause more oft to take its breath,
Whilst we were panting with the sultry weather,
And hardly cared to wed two words together,

But watch'd the surly advent of the storm,
Much as the brown-cheek'd planters of Barbadoes
Must watch a rising of the Negro swarm:—
Meantime it steer'd, like Odin's old Armadas,
Right on our coast;—a dismal, coal-black form;—
Many proud gaits were quell'd—and all bravadoes
Of folly ceased—and sundry idle jokers
Went home to cover up their tongs and pokers.

So fierce the lightning flashed.—In all their days
The oldest smugglers had not seen such flashing,
And they are used to many a pretty blaze,
To keep their Hollands from an awkward clashing
With hostile cutters in our creeks and bays:—
And truly one could think without much lashing
The fancy, that those coasting clouds so awful
And black, were fraught with spirits as unlawful.

The gay Parade grew thin—all the fair crowd
Vanish'd—as if they knew their own attractions,—
For now the lightning through a near hand cloud
Began to make some very crooked fractions—
Only some few remain'd that were not cow'd,
A few rough sailors, who had been in actions,
And sundry boatmen, that with quick yeo's,
Lest it should *blow*,—were pulling up the *Rose*:

(No flower, but a boat)—some more were hauling
The *Regent* by the head:—another crew
With that same cry peculiar to their *calling*—
Were heaving up the *Hope*:—and as they knew
The very gods themselves oft get a mauling
In their own realms, the seamen wisely drew
The *Neptune* rather higher on the beach,
That he might lie beyond his billows' reach.

And now the storm, with its despotic power,
Had all usurp'd the azure of the skies,
Making our daylight darker by an hour,
And some few drops—of an unusual size—
Few and distinct—scarce twenty to the shower,
Fell like huge tear-drops from a Giant's eyes—
But then this sprinkle thicken'd in a trice
And rain'd much *harder*—in good solid ice.

Oh! for a very storm of words to show
How this fierce crash of hail came rushing o'er us!
Handel would make the dusty organs blow
Grandly, and a rich storm in music score us;—

But ev'n his music seem'd composed and low,
When we were *handled* by this Hailstone Chorus;
Whilst thunder rumbled, with its awful sound,
And frozen comfits roll'd along the ground—

As big as bullets:—Lord! how they did batter
Our crazy tiles:—And now the lightning flash'd
Alternate with the dark, until the latter
Was rarest of the two:—the gust too dash'd
So terribly, I thought the hail must shatter
Some panes,—and so it did—and first it smash'd
The very square where I had chose my station
To watch the general illumination.

Another, and another, still came in,
And fell in jingling ruin at my feet,
Making transparent holes that let me win
Some samples of the storm:—Oh! it was sweet
To think I had a shelter for my skin,
Culling them through these 'loopholes of retreat'—
Which in a little we began to glaze—
Chiefly with a jacktowel and some baize!

By which, the cloud had pass'd o'erhead, but play'd
Its crooked fires in constant flashes still,
Just in our rear, as though it had array'd
Its heavy batteries at Fairlight Mill,
So that it lit the town, and grandly made
The rugged features of the Castle Hill
Leap, like a birth, from chaos, into light,
And then relapse into the gloomy night—

As parcel of the cloud:—the clouds themselves,
Like monstrous crags and summits everlasting,
Piled each on each in most gigantic shelves,
That Milton's devils were engaged in blasting.—
We could e'en fancy Satan and his elves
Busy upon those crags, and ever casting
Huge fragments loose,—and that we *felt* the sound
They made in falling to the startled ground.

And so the tempest scowl'd away,—and soon
Timidly shining through its skirts of jet,
We saw the rim of the pacific moon,
Like a bright fish entangled in a net,
Flashing its silver sides,—how sweet a boon,
Seemed her sweet light, as though it would beget,
With that fair smile, a calm upon the seas—
Peace in the sky—and coolness in the breeze!

Meantime the hail had ceased:—and all the brood
Of glaziers stole abroad to count their gains;—
At every window, there were maids who stood
Lamenting o'er the glass's small remains,—
Or with coarse linens made the fractions good,
Stanching the wind in all the wounded panes,—
Or, holding candles to the panes, in doubt:
The wind resolved—blowing the candles out.

No house was whole that had a southern front,—
No green-house but the same mishap befell;—
Bow-windows and *bell*-glasses bore the brunt,—
No sex in glass was spared!—For those who dwell
On each hill side, you might have swum a punt
In any of their parlours;—Mrs. Snell
Was slopp'd out of her seat,—and Mr. Hitchin
Had a *flow'r*-garden wash'd into a *Kitchen*.

But still the sea was mild, and quite disclaim'd
The recent violence.—Each after each
The gentle waves a gentle murmur framed,
Tapping, like Woodpeckers, the hollow beach.
Howbeit his *weather eye* the seaman aim'd
Across the calm, and hinted by his speech
A gale next morning—and when morning broke,
There was a gale—'quite equal to bespoke.'

Before high water—(it were better far
To christen it not *water* then, but *waiter*,
For then the tide is *serving at the bar*)
Rose such a swell—I never saw one greater!

Black, jagged billows rearing up in war
Like ragged roaring bears against the baiter,
With lots of froth upon the shingle shed,
Like stout poured out with a fine *beachy* head.

No open boat was open to a fare,
Or launch'd that morn on seven-shilling trips,
No bathing woman waded—none would dare
A dipping in the wave—but waived their dips,
No seagull ventured on the stormy air,
And all the dreary coast was clear of ships;
For two *lea* shores upon the river Lea
Are not so perilous as one at sea.

Awe-struck we sat, and gazed upon the scene
Before us in such horrid hurly-burly,—
A boiling ocean of mix'd black and green,
A sky of copper colour, grim and surly,—
When lo, in that vast hollow scoop'd between
Two rolling Alps of water,—white and curly!
We saw a pair of little arms a-skimming,
Much like a first or last attempt at swimming!

Sometimes a hand—sometimes a little shoe—
Sometimes a skirt—sometimes a hank of hair
Just like a dabbled seaweed rose to view,
Sometimes a knee, sometimes a back was bare—
At last a frightful summerset he threw
Right on the shingles. Any one could swear
The lad was dead—without a chance of perjury,
And batter'd by the surge beyond all surgery!

However we snatch'd up the corse thus thrown,
Intending, Christian-like, to sod and turf it,
And after venting Pity's sigh and groan,
Then Curiosity began with *her* fit;
And lo! the features of the Small Unknown!
'Twas he that of the surf had had this surfeit!—
And in his fob, the cause of late monopolies,
We found a contract signed with Mephistopheles.

A bond of blood, whereby the sinner gave
 His forfeit soul to Satan in reversion,
 Providing in this world he was to have
 A lordship over luck, by whose exertion
 He might control the course of cards, and brave
 All throws of dice,—but on a sea excursion
 The juggling Demon, in his usual vein,
 Seized the last cast—and *Nick'd* him in the *main*!

LINES

TO A LADY ON HER DEPARTURE FOR INDIA

Go where the waves run rather Holborn-hilly,
 And tempests make a soda-water sea,
 Almost as rough as our rough Piccadilly,
 And think of me!

Go where the mild Madeira ripens *her* juice,—
 A wine more praised than it deserves to be!
 Go pass the Cape, just capable of ver-juice,
 And think of me!

Go where the Tiger in the darkness prowleth,
 Making a midnight meal of he and she;
 Go where the Lion in his hunger howleth,
 And think of me!

Go where the serpent dangerously coileth,
 Or lies along at full length like a tree,
 Go where the Suttee in her own soot broileth,
 And think of me!

Go where with human notes the Parrot dealeth
 In mono-polly-logue with tongue as free,
 And like a woman, all she can revealeth,
 And think of me!

Go to the land of muslin and nankeening,
 And parasols of straw where hats should be,
 Go to the land of slaves and palankeening,
 And think of me!

Go to the land of Jungles and of vast hills,
And tall bamboos—may none *bamboozle* thee !
Go gaze upon their Elephants and Castles,
And think of me !

Go where a cook must always be a currier,
And parch the pepper'd palate like a pea,
Go where the fierce musquito is a worrier,
And think of me !

Go where the maiden on a marriage plan goes,
Consign'd for wedlock to Calcutta's quay,
Where woman goes for mart, the same as mangoes,
And think of me !

Go where the sun is very hot and fervent,
Go to the land of pagod and rupee,
Where every black will be your slave and servant,
And think of me !

PAIN IN A PLEASURE-BOAT

A SEA ECLOGUE

'I apprehend you !'—*School of Reform.*

BOATMAN.

SHOVE off there !—ship the rudder, Bill—cast off !
she's under way !

MRS. F.

She's under what ?—I hope she's not ! good gracious,
what a spray !

BOATMAN.

Run out the jib, and rig the boom ! keep clear of those
two brigs !

MRS. F.

I hope they don't intend some joke by running of their
rigs !

BOATMAN.

Bill, shift them bags of ballast aft—she's rather out of trim !

MRS. F.

Great bags of stones ! they're pretty things to help a boat to swim !

BOATMAN.

The wind is fresh—if she don't scud, it's not the breeze's fault !

MRS. F.

Wind fresh, indeed ! I never felt the air so full of salt !

BOATMAN.

That Schooner, Bill, harn't left the roads, with oranges and nuts !

MRS. F.

If seas have roads, they're very rough—I never felt such ruts !

BOATMAN.

It's neap, ye see, she's heavy lade, and couldn't pass the bar.

MRS. F.

The bar ! what, roads with turnpikes too ? I wonder where they are !

BOATMAN.

Ho ! brig ahoy ! hard up ! hard up ! that lubber cannot steer !

MRS. F.

Yes, yes,—hard up upon a rock ! I know some danger's near !

Lord, there's a wave ! it's coming in ! and roaring like a bull !

BOATMAN.

Nothing, Ma'am, but a little slop ! go large, Bill ! keep her full !

MRS. F.

What, keep her full ! what daring work ! when full, she must go down !

BOATMAN.

Why, Bill, it lulls ! ease off a bit—it's coming off the town !

Steady your helm ! we'll clear the *Pint* ! lay right for yonder pink !

MRS. F.

Be steady—well, I hope they can ! but they've got a pint of drink !

BOATMAN.

Bill, give that sheet another haul—she'll fetch it up this reach.

MRS. F.

I'm getting rather pale, I know, and they see it by that speech !

I wonder what it is, now, but—I never felt so queer.

BOATMAN.

Bill, mind your luff—why, Bill, I say, she's yawing—keep her near !

MRS. F.

Keep near ! we're going further off ; the land's behind our backs.

BOATMAN.

Be easy, Ma'am, it's all correct, that's only 'cause we tacks :

We shall have to beat about a bit,—Bill, keep her out to sea.

MRS. F.

Beat who about ? keep who at sea ?—how black they look at me !

BOATMAN.

It's veering round—I knew it would ! off with her head ! stand by !

MRS. F.

Off with her head ! whose ? where ? what with ?—
an axe I seem to spy !

BOATMAN.

She can't not keep her own, you see ; we shall have
to pull her in !

MRS. F.

They'll drown me, and take all I have ! my life's not
worth a pin !

BOATMAN.

Look out you know, be ready, Bill—just when she takes
the sand !

MRS. F.

The sand—O Lord ! to stop my mouth ! how every
thing is plann'd !

BOATMAN.

The handspike, Bill—quick, bear a hand ! now Ma'am,
just step ashore !

MRS. F.

What ! ain't I going to be kill'd—and welter'd in my
gore ?

Well, Heaven be praised ! but I'll not go a sailing any
more !

LITERARY AND LITERAL

THE March of Mind upon its mighty stilts,
(A spirit by no means to fasten mocks on,)
In travelling through Berks, Beds, Notts, and Wilts,
Hants—Bucks, Herts, Oxon,
Got up a thing our ancestors ne'er thought on,
A thing that, only in our proper youth,
We should have chuckled at—in sober truth,
A *Conversazione* at Hog's Norton !

A place whose native dialect, somehow,
 Has always by an adage been affronted,
 And that it is all *gutturals*, is now
 Taken for grunted.

Conceive the snoring of a greedy swine,
 The slobbering of a hungry Ursine Sloth—
 If you have ever heard such creature dine—
 And—for Hog's Norton, make a mix of both!—

O shades of Shakspeare! Chaucer! Spenser!
 Milton! Pope! Gray! Warton!
 O Colman! Kenny! Planché! Poole! Peake!
 Pocock! Reynolds! Morton!
 O Grey! Peel! Sadler! Wilberforce! Burdett!
 Hume! Wilmot Horton!
 Think of your prose and verse, and worse—delivered in
 Hog's Norton!—

The founder of Hog's Norton Athenæum
 Framed her society
 With some variety
 From Mr. Roscoe's Liverpool Museum;
 Not a mere pic-nic, for the mind's repast,
 But tempting to the solid knife-and-forker,
 It held its sessions in the house that last
 Had killed a porker.

It chanced one Friday,
 One Farmer Grayley stuck a very big hog,
 A perfect Gog or Magog of a pig-hog,
 Which made of course a literary high day,—
 Not that our Farmer was a man to go
 With literary tastes—so far from suiting 'em,
 When he heard mention of Professor Crowe,
 Or Lalla-Rookh, he always was for shooting 'em!
 In fact in letters he was quite a log,
 With him great Bacon
 Was literally taken,
 And Hogg—the Poet—nothing but a Hog!

As to all others on the list of Fame,
 Although they were discuss'd and mention'd daily,
 He only recognised one classic name,
 And thought that *she* had hung herself—*Miss Baillie!*
 To balance this, our Farmer's only daughter
 Had a great taste for the Castalian water—
 A Wordsworth worshipper—a Southey wooer—
 (Though men that deal in water-colour cakes
 May disbelieve the fact—yet nothing's truer)

She got the *bluer*

The more she dipped and dabbled in the *Lakes*.
 The secret truth is, Hope, the old deceiver,
 At future Authorship was apt to hint,
 Producing what some call the *Type-us* Fever,
 Which means a burning to be seen in print.
 Of learning's laurels—Miss Joanna Baillie—
 Of Mrs. Hemans—Mrs. Wilson—daily
 Dreamt Anne Priscilla Isabella Grayley;
 And Fancy hinting that she had the better
 Of L. E. L. by one initial letter,
 She thought the world would quite enraptur'd see

‘ LOVE LAYS AND LYRICS

BY

A. P. I. G.’

Accordingly, with very great propriety,
 She joined the H. N. B. and double S.,
 That is,—Hog's Norton Blue Stocking Society;
 And saving when her Pa his pigs prohibited,

Contributed

Her pork and poetry towards the mess.

This feast, we said, one Friday was the case,
 When farmer Grayley—from Macbeth to quote—
 Screwing his courage to the ‘sticking place,’
 Stuck a large knife into a grunter's throat:—
 A kind of murder that the law's rebuke
 Seldom condemns by shake of its peruke,
 Showing the little sympathy of *big-wigs*
 With *pig-wigs!*

The swine—poor wretch!—with nobody to speak for it
 And beg its life, resolved to have a squeak for it;
 So—like the fabled swan—died singing out,
 And, thus, there issued from the farmer's yard
 A note that notified without a card,
 An invitation to the evening rout.

And when the time came duly,—‘At the close of
 The day,’ as Beattie has it, ‘when the ham—’
 Bacon, and pork were ready to dispose of,
 And pettitoes and chit’lings too, to cram,—
 Walked in the H. N. B. and double S.’s
 All in appropriate and swinish dresses,
 For lo! it is a fact, and not a joke,
 Although the Muse might fairly jest upon it,
 They came—each ‘Pig-faced Lady,’ in that bonnet
 We call a *poke*.

The Members all assembled thus, a rare woman
 At pork and poetry was chosen *chairwoman*;—
 In fact, the bluest of the Blues, Miss Ikey,
 Whose whole pronunciation was so piggy,
 She always named the authoress of ‘*Psyche*—
 As Mrs. *Tiggey*!

And now arose a question of some moment,—
 What author for a lecture was the richer,
 Bacon or Hogg? there were no votes for Beaumont,
 But some for *Flitcher*;
 While others, with a more sagacious reasoning,
 Proposed another work,
 And thought their pork
 Would prove more relishing from Thomson’s Season-ing!

But, practised in Shakspearian readings daily,—
 O! Miss Macaulay! Shakspeare at Hog’s Norton!—
 Miss Anne Priscilla Isabella Grayley
 Selected *him* that evening to snort on.
 In short, to make our story not a big tale,
 Just fancy her exerting
 Her talents, and converting
 The Winter’s Tale to something like a pig-tale!

Her sister auditory,
 All sitting round, with grave and learned faces,
 Were very plauditory,
 Of course, and clapped her at the proper places;
 Till fanned at once by fortune and the Muse,
 She thought herself the blessedest of Blues.
 But Happiness, alas! has blights of ill,
 And Pleasure's bubbles in the air explode;—
 There is no travelling through life but still
 The heart will meet with breakers on the road!

With that peculiar voice
 Heard only from Hog's Norton throats and noses,
 Miss G., with Perdita, was making choice
 Of buds and blossoms for her summer posies,
 When coming to that line, where Proserpine
 Lets fall her flowers from the wain of Dis;

Imagine this —

Uprose on his hind legs old Farmer Grayley,
 Grunting this question for the club's digestion,
 'Do *Dis's Waggon* go from the Ould Bääley?'

COCKLE v. CACKLE

THOSE who much read advertisements and bills,
 Must have seen puffs of Cockle's Pills,
 Call'd Anti-bilious—

Which some Physicians sneer at, supercilious,
 But which we are assured, if timely taken,
 May save your liver and bacon;

Whether or not they really give one ease,
 I, who have never tried,
 Will not decide;

But no two things in union go like these—
 Viz.—Quacks and Pills—save Ducks and Pease.
 Now Mrs. W. was getting fallow,
 Her lilies not of the white kind, but yellow,
 And friends portended was preparing for
 A human Pâté Périgord;

She was, indeed, so very far from well,
 Her Son, in filial fear, procured a box
 Of those said pellets to resist Bile's shocks—
 And—tho' upon the ear it strangely knocks—
 To save her by a Cockle from a shell!

But Mrs. W., just like Macbeth,
 Who very vehemently bids us 'throw
 Bark to the Bow-wows,' hated physic so,
 It seem'd to share 'the bitterness of Death:'
 Rhubarb—Magnesia—Jalap, and the kind—
 Senna—Steel—Assa-foetida, and Squills—
 Powder or Draught—but least her throat inclined
 To give a course to Boluses or Pills;
 No—not to save her life, in lung or lobe,
 For all her lights' or all her liver's sake,
 Would her convulsive thorax undertake,
 Only one little uncelestial globe!

'Tis not to wonder at, in such a case,
 If she put by the pill-box in a place
 For linen rather than for drugs intended—
 Yet for the credit of the pills let's say
 After they thus were stow'd away,
 Some of the linen mended;

But Mrs. W., by disease's hint,
 Kept getting still more yellow in her tint,
 When lo! her second son, like elder brother,
 Marking the hue on the parental gills,
 Brought a new charge of Anti-turmeric Pills,
 To bleach the jaundiced visage of his Mother—
 Who took them—in her cupboard—like the other.

'Deeper and deeper, still,' of course,
 The fatal colour daily grew in force;
 Till daughter W. newly come from Rome,
 Acting the self-same filial, pillial, part,
 To cure Mamma, another dose brought home
 Of Cockles;—not the Cockles of her heart!
 These going where the others went before,
 Of course she had a very pretty store;

And then—some hue of health her cheek adorning,
 The Medicine so good must be,
 They brought her dose on dose, which she
 Gave to the up-stairs cupboard, 'night and morning.'
 Till wanting room at last, for other stocks,
 Out of the window one fine day she pitch'd
 The pillage of each box, and quite enrich'd
 The feed of Mister Burrell's hens and cocks,—
 A little Barber of a by-gone day,

Over the way,
 Whose stock in trade, to keep the least of shops,
 Was one great head of Kemble,—that is, John,
 Staring in plaster, with a *Brutus* on,
 And twenty little Bantam fowls—with *crops*.

Little Dame W. thought when through the sash
 She gave the physic wings,
 To find the very things
 So good for bile, so bad for chicken rash,
 For thoughtless cock, and unreflecting pullet!
 But while they gathered up the nauseous nubbles,
 Each peck'd itself into a peck of troubles,
 And brought the hand of Death upon its gullet.
 They might as well have addled been, or ratted,
 For long before the night—ah! woe betide
 The Pills! each suicidal Bantam died
 Unfatted!

Think of poor Burrell's shock,
 Of Nature's debt to see his hens all payers,
 And laid in death as Everlasting Layers,
 With Bantam's small Ex-Emperor, the Cock,
 In ruffled plumage and funereal hackle,
 Giving, undone by Cockle, a last Cackle!
 To see as stiff as stone his un'live stock,
 It really was enough to move his block.
 Down on the floor he dash'd, with horror big,
 Mr. Bell's third wife's mother's coachman's wig;

And with a tragic stare like his own Kemble,
 Burst out with natural emphasis enough,
 And voice that grief made tremble,
 Into that very speech of sad Macduff—
 ‘What! all my pretty chickens and their dam,
 At one fell swoop!—
 Just when I’d bought a coop
 To see the poor lamented creatures cram!’

After a little of this mood,
 And brooding over the departed brood,
 With razor he began to ope each craw,
 Already turning black, as black as coals;
 When lo! the undigested cause he saw—
 ‘Pison’d by goles!’

To Mrs. W.’s luck a contradiction,
 Her window still stood open to conviction;
 And by short course of circumstantial labour,
 He fix’d the guilt upon his adverse neighbour;—
 Lord! how he rail’d at her: declaring now,
 He’d bring an action ere next Term of Hilary,
 Then, in another moment, swore a vow,
 He’d make her do pill-penance in the pillory!
 She, meanwhile distant from the dimmest dream
 Of combating with guilt, yard-arm or arm-yard,
 Lapp’d in a paradise of tea and cream;
 When up ran Betty with a dismal scream—
 ‘Here’s Mr. Burrel, ma’am, with all his farmyard!’
 Straight in he came, unbowing and unbending,
 With all the warmth that iron and a barber
 Can harbour;
 To dress the head and front of her offending,
 The fuming phial of his wrath uncorking;
 In short, he made her pay him altogether,
 In hard cash, very *hard*, for ev’ry feather,
 Charging, of course, each Bantam as a Dorking;
 Nothing could move him, nothing make him supple,
 So the sad dame unpocketing her loss,
 Had nothing left but to sit hands across,
 And see her poultry ‘going down ten couple.’

Now birds by poison slain,
As venom'd dart from Indian's hollow cane,
Are edible ; and Mrs. W.'s thrift,—
 She had a thrifty vein,—
Destined one pair for supper to make shift,—
Supper as usual at the hour of ten :
But ten o'clock arrived and quickly pass'd,
Eleven—twelve—and one o'clock at last,
Without a sign of supper even then !
At length, the speed of cookery to quicken,
Betty was called, and with reluctant feet,
 Came up at a white heat—
' Well, never I see chicken like them chicken !
My saucepans they have been a pretty while in 'em !
Enough to stew them, if it comes to that,
To flesh and bones, and perfect rags ; but drat
Those Anti-biling Pills ! there is no bile in 'em !'

MY SON AND HEIR

My mother bids me bind my heir,
But not the trade where I should bind ;
To place a boy—the how and where—
It is the plague of parent-kind !

She does not hint the slightest plan,
Nor what indentures to indorse ;
Whether to bind him to a man,—
Or, like Mazeppa, to a horse.

What line to choose of likely rise,
To something in the Stocks at last,—
' Fast bind, fast find,' the proverb cries,
I find I cannot bind so fast !

A Statesman James can never be ;
A Tailor ?—there I only learn
His chief concern is cloth, and he
Is always cutting his concern.

A Seedsman ?—I'd not have him so ;
A Grocer's plum might disappoint ;
A Butcher ?—no, not that—although
I hear 'the times are out of joint !'

Too many of all trades there be,
Like Pedlars, each has such a pack ;
A merchant selling coals ?—we see
The buyer send to cellar back.

A Hardware dealer ?—that might please,
But if his trade's foundation leans
On spikes and nails, he won't have easo
When he retires upon his means.

A Soldier ?—there he has not nerves,
A Sailor seldom lays up pelf :
A Baker ?—no, a baker serves,
His customer before himself.

Dresser of hair ?—that's not the sort ;
A Joiner jars with his desire—
A Churchman ?—James is very short,
And cannot to a church aspire.

A Lawyer ?—that's a hardish term !
A Publisher might give him ease,
If he could into Longman's firm,
Just plunge at once 'in medias Rees.'

A shop for pot, and pan, and cup,
Such brittle Stock I can't advise ;
A Builder running houses up,
Their gains are stories—may be lies !

A Coppersmith I can't endure—
Nor petty Usher A, B, C-ing ;
A Publican, no father sure
Would be the author of his being !

A Paper-maker ?—come he must
To rags before he sells a sheet—
A Miller ?—all his toil is just
To make a meal—he does not eat.

A Currier ?—that by favour goes—
A Chandler gives me great misgiving—
An Undertaker ?—one of those
That do not hope to get their living !

Three Golden Balls ?—I like them not ;
An Auctioneer I never did—
The victim of a slavish lot,
Obliged to do as he is bid !

A Broker watching fall and rise
Of Stock ?—I'd rather deal in stone,—
A Printer ?—there his toils comprise
Another's work beside his own.

A Cooper ?—neither I nor Jim
Have any taste or turn for that—
A Fish retailer ?—but with him,
One part of trade is always flat.

A Painter ?—long he would not live,—
An Artist's a precarious craft—
In trade Apothecaries give,
But very seldom take, a draught.

A Glazier ?—what if he should smash !
A Crispin he shall not be made—
A Grazier may be losing cash,
Although he drives 'a roaring trade.'

Well, something must be done ! to look
On all my little works around—
James is too big a boy, like book
To leave upon the shelf unbound.

But what to do ?—my temples ache
From evening's dew till morning's pearl,
What course to take my boy to make—
O could I make my boy—a girl !

NO !

No sun—no moon !
 No morn—no noon—
 No dawn—no dusk—no proper time of day—
 No sky—no earthly view—
 No distance looking blue—
 No road—no street—no 't'other side the way'—
 No end to any Row—
 No indications where the Crescents go—
 No top to any steeple—
 No recognitions of familiar people—
 No courtesies for showing 'em—
 No knowing 'em !—
 No travelling at all—no locomotion,
 No inkling of the way—no notion—
 'No go'—by land or ocean—
 No mail—no post—
 No news from any foreign coast—
 No Park—no Ring—no afternoon gentility—
 No company—no nobility—
 No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
 No comfortable feel in any member—
 No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
 No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds,——
 November !

A CUSTOM-HOUSE BREEZE

ONE day—no matter for the month or year,
 A Calais packet, just come over,
 And safely moor'd within the pier,
 Began to land her passengers at Dover ;
 All glad to end a voyage long and rough,
 And during which,
 Through roll and pitch,
 The Ocean-King had sickophants enough !

Away as fast as they could walk or run,
Eager for steady rooms and quiet meals,
With bundles, bags, and boxes at their heels,
Away the passengers all went, but one,
A female, who from some mysterious check,
Still linger'd on the steamer's deck,
As if she did not care for land a tittle,
For horizontal rooms, and cleanly victual—
Or nervously afraid to put

Her foot

Into an Isle described as 'tight and little.'

In vain commissioner and touter,
Porter and waiter throng'd about her;
Boring, as such officials only bore—
In spite of rope and barrow, knot and truck,
Of plank and ladder, there she stuck,
She couldn't, no, she wouldn't go on shore.

'But ma'am,' the steward interfered,

'The vessel must be cleared.

You mustn't stay aboard, ma'am, no one don't!

It's quite agin the orders so to do—

And all the passengers is gone but you.'

Says she, 'I cannot go ashore and won't!'

'You ought to!'

'But I can't!'

'You must!'

'I shan't!'

At last, attracted by the racket,

'Twixt gown and jacket,

The captain came himself, and cap in hand,

Begg'd very civilly to understand

Wherefore the lady could not leave the packet.

'Why then,' the lady whispered with a shiver,
That made the accents quiver,

'I've got some foreign silks about me pinn'd,
In short, so many things, all contraband,
To tell the truth I am afraid to land,
In such a searching wind!'

ETCHING MORALISED

TO A NOBLE LADY

'To point a moral.'—*Johnson*.

FAIREST Lady and Noble, for once on a time,
 Condescend to accept, in the humblest of rhyme,
 And a style more of Gay than of Milton,
 A few opportune verses design'd to impart
 Some didactical hints in a Needlework Art,
 Not described by the Countess of Wilton.

An Art not unknown to the delicate hand
 Of the fairest and first in this insular land,
 But in Patronage Royal delighting ;
 And which now your own feminine fantasy wins,
 Tho' it scarce seems a lady-like work that begins
 In a *scratching* and ends in a *biting* !

Yet oh ! that the dames of the Scandalous School
 Would but use the same acid, and sharp-pointed tool,
 That are plied in the said operations—
 Oh ! would that our Candours on copper would sketch !
 For the first of all things in beginning to etch
 Are—good *grounds* for our representations.

Those protective and delicate coatings of wax,
 Which are meant to resist the corrosive attacks
 That would ruin the copper completely ;
 Thin cerements which whoso remembers the Bee
 So applauded by Watts, the divine LL.D.,
 Will be careful to spread very neatly.

For why ? like some intricate deed of the law,
 Should the ground in the process be left with a flaw,
 Aquafortis is far from a joker ;
 And attacking the part that no coating protects,
 Will turn out as distressing to all your *effects*
 As a landlord who puts in a broker.

Then carefully spread the conservative stuff,
Until all the bright metal is cover'd enough,
To repel a destructive so active ;
For in Etching, as well as in Morals, pray note
That a little raw spot, or a hole in a coat,
Your ascetics find vastly attractive.

Thus the ground being laid, very even and flat,
And then smoked with a taper, till black as a hat,
Still from future disasters to screen it,
Just allow me, by way of precaution, to state,
You must hinder the footman from changing your *plate*,
Nor yet suffer the butler to clean it.

Nay, the Housemaid, perchance, in her passion to scrub,
May suppose the dull metal in want of a rub,
Like the Shield which Swift's readers remember—
Not to mention the chance of some other mishaps,
Such as having your copper made up into caps
To be worn on the First of September.

But aloof from all damage by Betty or John,
You secure the veil'd surface, and trace thereupon
The design you conceive the most proper :
Yet gently, and not with a needle too keen,
Lest it pierce to the wax through the paper between,
And of course play Old Scratch with the copper.

So in worldly affairs, the sharp-practising man
Is not always the one who succeeds in his plan,
Witness Shylock's judicial exposure ;
Who, as keen as his knife, yet with agony found,
That while urging his *point* he was losing his *ground*,
And incurring a fatal disclosure.

But, perhaps, without tracing at all, you may choose
To indulge in some little extempore views,
Like the older artistical people ;
For example, a Corydon playing his pipe,
In a Low Country marsh, with a Cow after Cuyp,
And a Goat skipping over a steeple.

A wild Deer at a rivulet taking a sup,
 With a couple of Pillars put in to fill up,
 Like the columns of certain diurnals ;
 Or a very brisk sea, in a very stiff gale,
 And a very Dutch boat, with a very big sail—
 Or a bevy of Retzsch's Infernals.

Architectural study—or rich Arabesque—
 Allegorical dream—or a view picturesque,
 Near to Naples, or Venice, or Florence ;
 Or 'as harmless as lambs and as gentle as doves,'
 A sweet family cluster of plump little Loves,
 Like the Children by Reynolds or Lawrence.

But whatever the subject, your exquisite taste
 Will ensure a design very charming and chaste,
 Like yourself, full of nature and beauty—
 Yet besides the *good points* you already reveal,
 You will need a few others—of well-temper'd steel,
 And especially form'd for the duty.

For suppose that the tool be imperfectly set,
 Over many *weak lengths in your line* you will fret,
 Like a pupil of Walton and Cotton,
 Who remains by the brink of the water, agape,
 While the jack, trout, or barbel, effects its escape
 Thro' the gut or silk line being rotten.

Therefore, let the steel point be set truly and round,
 That the finest of strokes may be even and sound,
 Flowing glibly where fancy would lead 'em.
 But alas ! for the needle that fetters the hand,
 And forbids even sketches of Liberty's land
 To be drawn with the requisite freedom !

Oh ! the botches I've seen by a tool of the sort,
 Rather hitching than etching, and making, in short,
 Such stiff, crabbed, and angular scratches,
 That the figures seem'd statues or mummies from tombs,
 While the trees were as rigid as bundles of brooms,
 And the herbage like bunches of matches !

The stiff clouds as if carefully iron'd and starch'd,
While a cast-iron bridge, meant for wooden, o'er-arch'd
Something more like a road than a river.

Prythee, who in such characteristics could see
Any trace of the beautiful land of the free—

The Free-Mason—Free-Trader—Free-Liver !

But prepared by a hand that is skilful and nice,
The fine point glides along like a skate on the ice,

At the will of the Gentle Designer,
Who impelling the needle just presses so much,
That each line of her labour *the copper may touch*,
As if done by a penny-a-liner.

And behold ! how the fast-growing images gleam !
Like the sparkles of gold in a sunshiny stream,

Till perplex'd by the glittering issue,
You repine for a light of a tenderer kind—
And in choosing a substance for making a blind,
Do not sneeze at the paper call'd *tissue*.

For, subdued by the sheet so transparent and white,
Your design will appear in a soberer light,

And reveal its defects on inspection,
Just as Glory achieved, or political scheme,
And some more of our dazzling performances seem,
Not so bright on a *cooler reflection*.

So the juvenile Poet with ecstasy views
His first verses, and dreams that the songs of his Muso

Are as brilliant as Moore's and as tender—
Till some critical sheet scans the faulty design,
And alas ! *takes the shine out of every line*

That had form'd such a vision of splendour.

Certain objects, however, may come in your sketch,
Which, design'd by a hand unaccustom'd to etch,

With a luckless result may be branded ;
Wherefore add this particular rule to your code,
Let all vehicles take the *wrong* side of the road,
And man, woman, and child, be *left-handed*.

Yet regard not the awkward appearance with doubt,
But remember how often mere blessings fall out,
That at first seem'd no better than curses ;
So, till *things take a turn*, live in hope, and depend
That whatever is wrong will come right in the end,
And console you for all your *reverses*.

But of errors why speak, when for beauty and truth
Your free, spirited Etching is worthy, in sooth,
Of that Club (may all honour betide it !)
Which, tho' dealing in copper, by genius and taste,
Has accomplish'd *a service of plate* not disgraced
By the work of a Goldsmith beside it !¹

So your sketch superficially drawn on the plate,
It becomes you to fix in a permanent state,
Which involves a precise operation,
With a keen biting fluid, which *eating its way*—
As in other professions is common they say—
Has attain'd an artistical station.

And it's, oh ! that some splenetic folks I could name
If they *must* deal in acids would use but the same,
In such innocent graphical labours !
In place of the virulent spirit wherewith—
Like the polecat, the weasel, and things of that kith—
They keep biting the backs of their neighbours !

But beforehand, with wax or the shoemaker's pitch,
You must build a neat dyke round the margin, in which
You may pour the dilute aquafortis.
For if raw, like a dram, it will shock you to trace
Your design with a horrible froth on its face,
Like a wretch in articulo mortis.

Like a wretch in the pangs that too many endure
From the use of *strong waters*, without any pure,
A vile practice, most sad and improper !
For, from painful examples, this warning is found,
That the raw burning spirit will *take up the ground*,
In the churchyard, as well as on copper !

¹ 'The Deserted Village.' Illustrated by the Etching Club.

But the Acid has duly been lower'd, and bites
Only just where the visible metal invites,

Like a nature inclined to meet troubles ;
And behold ! as each slender and glittering line
Effervesces, you trace the completed design

In an elegant bead-work of bubbles !

And yet constantly secretly eating its way,
The shrewd acid is making the substance its prey,

Like some sorrow beyond inquisition,
Which is gnawing the heart and the brain all the while
That the face is illumed by its cheerfullest smile,
And the wit is in bright ebullition.

But still stealthily feeding, the treacherous stuff
Has corroded and deepened some portions enough—

The pure sky, and the water so placid—
And these tenderer tints to defend from attack,
With some turpentine varnish and sooty lamp-black
You must *stop out* the ferreting acid.

But before with the varnishing brush you proceed,
Let the plate with cold water be thoroughly freed

From the other less innocent liquor—
After which, on whatever you want to protect,
Put a *coat* that will act to that very effect,

Like the black one which hangs on the Vicar.

Then the varnish well dried—urge the biting again,
But how long at its meal the *eau forte* may remain,

Time and practice alone can determine :
But of course not so long that the Mountain, and Mill,
The rude Bridge, and the Figures, whatever you will,
Are as black as the spots on your ermine.

It is true, none the less, that a dark-looking scrap,
With a sort of Blackheath, and Black Forest, mayhap,

Is consider'd as rather Rembrandty ;
And that very black cattle and very black sheep,
A black dog, and a shepherd as black as a sweep,
Are the pets of some great Dilettante.

So with certain designers, one needs not to name,
All this life is a dark scene of sorrow and shame,
From our birth to our final adjourning—
Yea, this excellent earth and its glories, alack!
What with ravens, palls, cottons, and devils, as black
As a Warehouse for Family Mourning!

But before your own picture arrives at that pitch,
While the lights are still light, and the shadows, though
rich,

More transparent than ebony shutters,
Never minding what Black-Arted critics may say,
Stop the biting, and pour the green fluid away,
As you please, into bottles or gutters.

Then removing the ground and the wax *at a heat*,
Cleanse the surface with oil, spermaceti or sweet,
For your hand a performance scarce proper—
So some careful professional person secure—
For the Laundress will not be a safe amateur—
To assist you in *cleaning the copper*.

And, in truth, 'tis a rather unpleasantish job,
To be done on a hot German stove, or a hob—
Though as sure of an instant forgetting
When—as after the dark clearing-off of a storm—
The fair Landscape shines out in a lustre as warm
As the glow of the sun in its setting!

Thus your Etching complete, it remains but to hint,
That with certain assistance from paper and print,
Which the proper Mechanic will settle,
You may charm all your Friends—without any sad tale
Of such perils and ills as beset Lady Sale—
With a *fine India Proof of your Metal*.

SPRING

A NEW VERSION

'*Ham.* The air bites shrewdly—it is very cold.

Hor. It is a nipping and an eager air.'—*Hamlet.*

'COME, *gentle* Spring! *ethereal mildness* come!'

Oh! Thomson, void of rhyme as well as reason,
How couldst thou thus poor human nature hum?
There's no such season.

The Spring! I shrink and shudder at her name!

For why, I find her breath a bitter blighter!
And suffer from her *blows* as if they came
From Spring the Fighter.

Her praises, then, let hardy poets sing,

And be her tuneful laureates and upholders,
Who do not feel as if they had a *Spring*
Pour'd down their shoulders!

Let others eulogise her floral shows,

From me they cannot win a single stanza,
I know her blooms are in full blow—and so's
The Influenza.

Her cowslips, stocks, and lilies of the vale,

Her honey-blossoms that you hear the bees at,
Her pansies, daffodils, and primrose pale,
Are things I sneeze at!

Fair is the vernal quarter of the year!

And fair its early buddings and its blowings—
But just suppose Consumption's seeds appear
With other sowings!

For me, I find, when eastern winds are high,

A frigid, not a genial inspiration;
Nor can, like Iron-Chested Chubb, defy
An inflammation.

Smitten by breezes from the land of plague,
 To me all vernal luxuries are fables,
 Oh! where's the *Spring* in a rheumatic leg,
 Stiff as a table's?

I limp in agony,—I wheeze and cough;
 And quake with Ague, that great Agitator;
 Nor dream, before July, of leaving off
 My Respirator.

What wonder if in May itself I lack
 A peg for laudatory verse to hang on?—
 Spring mild and gentle!—yes, as Spring-heeled Jack
 To those he sprang on.

In short, whatever panegyrics lie
 In fulsome odes too many to be cited,
 The tenderness of Spring is all my eye,
 And that is blighted!

ODE

IMITATED FROM HORACE

Oh! well may poets make a fuss
 In summer time, and sigh '*O rus!*'
 Of London pleasures sick:
 My heart is all at pant to rest
 In greenwood shades,—my eyes detest
 This endless meal of brick!

What joy have I in June's return?
 My feet are parch'd—my eyeballs burn,
 I scent no flowery gust;
 But faint the flagging zephyr springs,
 With dry Macadam on its wings,
 And turns me 'dust to dust.'

My sun his daily course renews
 Due east, but with no Eastern dew;
 The path is dry and hot!
 His setting shows more tamely still,
 He sinks behind no purple hill,
 But down a chimney's pot!

Oh ! but to hear the milk-maid blithe,
Or early mower whet his scythe
The dewy meads among !—
My grass is of that sort—alas !—
That makes no hay,—call'd sparrow-grass
By folks of vulgar tongue !

Oh ! but to smell the woodbine sweet !
I think of cowslip-cups—but meet
With very vile rebuffs !
For meadow buds, I get a whiff
Of Cheshire cheese,—or only sniff
The turtle made at Cuff's.

How tenderly Rousseau review'd
His periwinkles !—mine are stew'd !
My rose blooms on a gown !
I hunt in vain for eglantine—
And find my blue-bell on the sign
That marks the Bell and Crown !

Where are ye, birds ! that blithely wing
From tree to tree, and gaily sing
Or mourn in thickets deep ?
My cuckoo has some ware to sell,
The watchman is my Philomel,
My blackbird is a sweep !

Where are ye, linnet ! lark ! and thrush !
That perch on leafy bough and bush,
And tune the various song ?
Two hurdy-gurdists, and a poor
Street-Handel grinding at my door,
Are all my 'tuneful throng.'

Where are ye, early-purling streams,
Whose waves reflect the morning beams
And colours of the skies ?
My rills are only puddle-drains
From shambles—or reflect the stains
Of calimanco-dyes.

Sweet are the little brooks that run
O'er pebbles glancing in the sun,
Singing in soothing tones:—
Not thus the city streamlets flow;
They make no music as they go,
Tho' never 'off the stones.'

Where are ye, pastoral pretty sheep,
That wont to bleat, and frisk, and leap
Beside your woolly dams?
Alas! instead of harmless crooks,
My Corydons use iron hooks,
And skin—not shear—the lambs.

The pipe whereon, in olden day,
Th' Arcadian herdsman us'd to play
Sweetly—here soundeth not;
But merely breathes unwelcome fumes,
Meanwhile the city boor consumes
The rank weed—'piping hot.'

All rural things are vilely mock'd,
On every hand the sense is shock'd
With objects hard to bear:
Shades,—vernal shades!—where wine is sold!
And for a turfy bank, behold
An Ingram's rustic chair!

Where are ye, London meads and bow'rs,
And gardens redolent of flow'rs
Wherein the zephyr wons?
Alas! Moor Fields are fields no more!
See Hatton's Garden brick'd all o'er;
And that bare wood—St. John's.

No pastoral scene procures me peace;
I hold no Leasowes in my lease,
No cot set round with trees:
No sheep-white hill my dwelling flanks
And omnium furnishes my banks
With brokers—not with bees.

Oh! well may poets make a fuss
 In summer time, and sigh '*O rus!*'
 Of city pleasures sick:
 My heart is all at pant to rest
 In greenwood shades,—my eyes detest
 This endless meal of brick!

ON A PICTURE OF HERO AND LEANDER

Why, Love, why
 Such a Water-rover?
 Would she love thee more
 For coming *half seas over*?

Why, Lady, why
 So in love with dipping?
 Must a lad of *Greece*
 Come all over *dripping*?

Why, Cupid, why
 Make the passage brighter?
 Were not any boat
 Better than a *lighter*?

Why, Maiden, why
 So intrusive standing?
 Must thou be on the stair,
 When he's on the *landing*?

FOR THE FOURTEENTH OF FEBRUARY

No popular respect will I omit
 To do thee honour on this happy day,
 When every loyal lover tasks his wit
 His simple truth in studious rhymes to pay,
 And to his mistress dear his hopes convey.
 Rather, thou knowest, I would still outrun
 All calendars with Love's—whose date always
 Thy bright eyes govern better than the sun,—

For with thy favour was my life begun ;
 And still I reckon on from smiles to smiles,
 And not by summers, for I thrive on none
 But those thy cheerful countenance compiles—
 Oh, if it be to choose and call thee mine,
 Love, thou art every day my Valentine !

A BUNCH OF FORGET-ME-NOTS

FORGET me not ! It is the cry of clay,
 From infancy to age, from ripe to rotten ;
 For who, ' to dumb forgetfulness a prey,'
 Would be forgotten ?

Hark the poor infant, in the age of pap,
 A little Laplander on nurse's lap,
 Some strange, neglectful, gossiping old Trot,
 Meanwhile on dull Oblivion's lap she lieth,
 In her shrill Baby-lonish language crieth—
 What ?

' Forget-me-not ! '

The schoolboy writes unto the self-same tune,
 The yearly letter, guiltless of a blot,
 ' We break up on the twenty-third of June ' ;
 And then, with comps. from Dr. Polyglot,
 ' P.S. Forget me not ! '

When last my elder brother sailed for Quito,
 My chalky foot had in a hobble got—
 Why did he plant his timber toe on *my* toe,
 To stamp on memory's most tender spot
 ' Forget me not ! '

The dying nabob, on whose shrivelled skin
 The Indian ' mulliga ' has left its ' tawny,'
 Leaving life's pilgrimage so rough and thorny,
 Bindeth his kin
 Two tons of sculptured marble to allot—
 A small ' Forget me not ! '

The hardy sailor parting from his wives,
 Sharing among them all that he has got,
 Keeps a fond eye upon their after-lives,
 And says to seventeen—‘If I am shot,
 Forget me not.’

Why, all the mob of authors that now trouble
 The world with cold-pressed volumes and with hot,
 They all are seeking reputation’s bubble,
 Hopelessly hoping, like Sir Walter Scott,
 To tie in fame’s own handkerchief a double
 Forget-me-knot!

A past past tense,
 In fact, is sought for by all human kind,
 And hence
 Our common Irish wish—to leave ourselves behind.

Forget me not!—It is the common chorus
 Swell’d by all those behind us and before us;
 Each fifth of each November
 Calls out ‘Remember!’

And even a poor man of straw will try
 To live by dint of powder and of plot.
 In short, it is the cry of every Guy—
 ‘Forget me not!’

JARVIS AND MRS. COPE

A DECIDEDLY SERIOUS BALLAD

IN Bunhill Row, some years ago,
 There liv’d one Mrs. Cope;
 A pious woman she was call’d,
 As Pius as a Pope.

Not pious in its proper sense,
 But chatt’ring like a bird
 Of sin and grace—in such a case
 Mag-piety’s the word.

Cries she, 'the Reverend Mr. Trigg
This day a text will broach,
And much I long to hear him preach,
So Betty call a coach.'

A bargain, tho', she wish'd to make
Ere they began to jog—
'Now, coachman, what d'ye take me for?'
Says coachman, 'for a hog.'

But Jarvis when he set her down,
A second *hog* did lack—
Whereas she only offer'd him
One shilling and 'a track.'

Said he—'there an't no tracks in Quaife,
You and your tracks be both—'
And, affidavit-like, he clench'd
Her shilling with an oath.

Said she—'I'll have you fined for this,
And soon it shall be done,
I'll have you up at Worship Street,
You wicked one,—aught one!'

And sure enough, at Worship Street
That Friday week they stood,
She said *bad* language he had used,
And thus she '*made it good.*'

'He said two shilling was his fare,
And wouldn't take no less—
I said one shilling was enough—
And he said C—U—S!

'And when I raised my eyes at that,
He swore again at them,
I said he was a wicked man,
And he said D—A—M.'

Now Jarvy's turn was come to speak,
So he stroked down his hair,
'All what she says is false—cause why?
I'll swear I never swear!

'There's old Joe Hatch, the waterman,
Can tell you what I am,
I'm one of seven children, all
Brought up without a dam!

'He'll say from two year old and less
Since ever I were nust,
If ever I said C—U—S,
I wish I may be cust!

'At Sion Cottage I takes up,
And raining all the while,
To go to New Jerusalem,
A wery long two mile.

'Well, when I axes for my fare,
She rows me in the street,
And uses words as is not fit
For coachmen to repeat!

'Says she,—I know where you will go,
You sinner! I know well—
Your worship, it's the P—I—T
Of E and double L!'

Now here his worship stopp'd the case—
Said he—'I fine you both!
And of the two—why Mrs. Cope's
I think the biggest oath!'

THE CHINA-MENDER

Good morning, Mr. What-d'ye-call! Well! here's
another pretty job!

Lord help my Lady!—what a smash!—if you had
only heard her sob!

It was all through Mr. Lambert: but for certain he
was winy,

To think for to go to sit down on a table full of Chiny.

'Deuce take your stupid head!' says my Lady to
his very face;

But politeness, you know, is nothing, when there's
Chiny in the case:

And if ever a woman was fond of Chiny to a passion
It's my mistress, and all sorts of it, whether new or
old fashion.
Her brother's a sea-captain, and brings her home ship-
loads—
Such bonzes, and such dragons, and nasty, squatting
things like toads ;
And such nidnoddin mandarins, with palsies in the
head :
I declare I've often dreamt of them, and had night-
mares in my bed.
But the frightfuller they are—lawk ! she loves them
all the better :
She'd have Old Nick himself made of Chiny if they'd
let her.
Lawk-a-mercy ! break her Chiny, and it's breaking
her very heart ;
If I touch'd it, she would very soon say, ' Mary, we
must part.'
To be sure she *is* unlucky : only Friday comes Master
Randall,
And breaks a broken spout, and fresh chips a tea-cup
handle :
He's a dear, sweet little child, but he will so finger and
touch,
And that's why my Lady doesn't take to children
much.
Well ! there's stupid Mr. Lambert, with his two great
coat flaps,
Must go and sit down on the Dresden shepherdesses'
laps,
As if there was no such things as rosewood chairs in
the room ;
I couldn't have made a greater sweep with the handle
of the broom.
Mercy on us ! how my mistress began to rave and
tear !
Well ! after all, there's nothing like good ironstone
ware for wear.

If ever I marry, that 's flat, I'm sure it won't be John
Dockery,
I should be a wretched woman in a shop full of crockery.
I should never like to wipe it, though I love to be neat
and tidy,
And afraid of mad bulls on market-days every Monday
and Friday.
I'm very much mistook if Mr. Lambert's will be a catch ;
The breaking the Chiny will be the breaking off of
his own match.
Missis wouldn't have an angel, if he was careless about
Chiny ;
She never forgives a chip, if it 's ever so small and tiny.
Lawk ! I never saw a man in all my life in such a taking !
I could find in my heart to pity him for all his mischief-
making.
To see him stand a-hammering and stammering, like
a zany ;
But what signifies apologies, if they wont mend old
Chaney !
If he sent her up whole crates full, from Wedgwood's
and Mr. Spode's,
He couldn't make amends for the crack'd mandarins
and smash'd toads.
Well ! every one has their tastes, but, for my parts,
my own self,
I'd rather have the figures on my poor dear grand-
mother's old shelf :
A nice pea-green poll-parrot, and two reapers with
brown ears of corns,
And a shepherd with a crook after a lamb with two
gilt horns,
And such a Jemmy Jessamy in top-boots and sky-blue
vest,
And a frill and flowered waistcoat, with a fine bowpot
at the breast.
God help her, poor old soul ! I shall come into 'em
at her death,
Though she 's a hearty woman for her years, except
her shortness of breath.

Well! you think the things will mend—if they wont,
Lord mend us all!

My Lady will go in fits, and Mr. Lambert won't need
to call:

I'll be bound in any money, if I had a guinea to give,
He won't sit down again on Chiny the longest day
he has to live.

Poor soul! I only hope it won't forbid his banns of
marriage,

Or he'd better have sat behind on the spikes of my
Lady's carriage.

But you'll join 'em all of course, and stand poor Mr.
Lambert's friend;

I'll look in twice a day, just to see, like, how they mend.
To be sure it is a sight that might draw tears from
dogs and cats;

Here's this pretty little pagoda, now, has lost four of
its cocked hats:

Be particular with the pagoda: and then here's this
pretty bowl—

The Chinese Prince is making love to nothing because
of this hole;

And here's another Chinese man, with a face just like
a doll—

Do stick his pigtail on again, and just mend his parasol.
But I needn't tell you what to do; only do it out of
hand,

And charge whatever you like to charge—my Lady
won't make a stand.

Well! good morning, Mr. What-d'ye-call; for it's time
our gossip ended:

And you know the proverb, the less as is said, the
sooner the Chiny's mended.

A CHARITY SERMON

“I would have walked many a mile to have communed with you ; and, believe me, I will shortly pay thee another visit ; but my friends, I fancy, wonder at my stay, so let me have the money immediately.” Trulliber then put on a stern look, and cried out, “Thou dost not intend to rob me ?”

* * * * *

“I would have thee know, friend,” addressing himself to Adams, “I shall not learn my duty from such as thee. I know what charity is, better than to give to vagabonds.”—*Joseph Andrews.*

I'm an extremely charitable man—no collar and long hair, though a little caroty ;
Demure, half-inclined to the unknown tongues, but
I never gain'd anything by Charity—
I got a little boy into the Foundling, but his unfortunate mother was traced and baited,
And the overseers found *her* out—and she found *me* out—and the child was affiliated.

Oh, Charity will come home to roost—
Like curses and chickens is Charity.

I once, near Whitehall's very old wall, when ballads danc'd over the whole of it,
Put a bad five-shilling piece into a beggar's hat, but the old hat had got a hole in it ;
And a little boy caught it in his little hat, and an officer's eye seem'd to care for it,
As my bad crown-piece went through *his* bad crown-piece, and they took me up to Queen's Square for it.
Oh, Charity, &c.

I let my very old (condemn'd) old house to a man, at a rent that was shockingly low,
So I found a roof for his ten motherless babies—all defunct and fatherless now ;

For the plaguey one-sided party-wall fell in, so did the roof, on son and daughter,
And twelve jurymen sat on eleven bodies, and brought in a very personal verdict of Manslaughter.

Oh, Charity, &c.

I picked up a young well-dress'd gentleman, who had fallen in a fit in St. Martin's Court,
And charitably offer'd to see him home,—for charity always seem'd to be my forte,
And I've had presents for seeing fallen gentlemen home, but this was a very unlucky job—
Do you know, he got my watch—my purse—and my handkerchief—for it was one of the swell mob.

Oh, Charity, &c.

Being four miles from Town, I stopt a horse that had run away with a man, when it seem'd that they must be dash'd to pieces,

Though several kind people were following him with all their might—but such following a horse his speed increases ;

I held the horse while he went to recruit his strength ;
and I meant to ride home, of course ;

But the crowd came up and took me up—for it turned out the man had run away with the horse.

Oh, Charity, &c.

I watch'd last month all the drovers and drivers about the suburbs, for it's a positive fact,

That I think the utmost penalty ought always to be enforce'd against everybody under Mr. Martin's Act ;

But I couldn't catch one hit over the horns, or over the shins, or on the ears, or over the head ;

And I caught a rheumatism from early wet hours, and got five weeks of ten swell'd fingers in bed.

Oh, Charity, &c.

Well, I've utterly done with Charity, though I us'd so to preach about its finest fount ;

Charity may do for some that are more lucky, but I can't turn it to any account—

It goes so the very reverse way—even if one chirrup
it up with a dust of piety ;

That henceforth let it be understood, I take my name
entirely out of the List of the Subscribers to the
Humane Society.

Oh, Charity, &c.

HYMENEAL RETROSPECTIONS

I

O KATE ! my dear Partner, through joy and through
strife !

When I look back at Hymen's dear day,
Not a lovelier bride ever chang'd to a wife,
Though you're now so old, wizen'd, and grey !

Those eyes, then, were stars, shining rulers of fate !

But as liquid as stars in a pool ;
Though now they're so dim, they appear, my dear Kate,
Just like gooseberries boil'd for a fool !

That brow was like marble, so smooth and so fair ;
Though it's wrinkled so crookedly now,
As if Time, when those furrows were made by the
share,

Had been tipsy whilst driving his plough !

Your nose, it was such as the sculptors all chose,
When a Venus demanded their skill ;
Though now it can hardly be reckon'd a nose,
But a sort of Poll-Parrot bill !

Your mouth, it was then quite a bait for the bees,
Such a nectar there hung on each lip ;
Though now it has taken that lemon-like squeeze,
Not a blue-bottle comes for a sip !

Your chin, it was one of Love's favourite haunts,
From its dimple he could not get loose ;
Though now the neat hand of a barber it wants,
Or a singe, like the breast of a goose !

How rich were those locks, so abundant and full,
With their ringlets of auburn so deep !
Though now they look only like frizzles of wool,
By a bramble torn off from a sheep !
That neck, not a swan could excel it in grace,
While in whiteness it vied with your arms ;
Though now a grave 'kerchief you properly place,
To conceal that scrag-end of your charms !
Your figure was tall, then, and perfectly straight,
Though it now has two twists from upright—
But bless you ! still bless you ! my Partner ! my Kate !
Though you be such a perfect old fright !

II

THE sun was slumbering in the West,

My daily labours past ;

On Anna's soft and gentle breast

My head reclined at last ;—

The darkness clos'd around, so dear

To fond congenial souls,

And thus she murmur'd at my ear,

' My love, we're out of coals !—

' That Mister Bond has call'd again,

Insisting on his rent ;

And all the Todds are coming up

To see us, out of Kent ;—

I quite forgot to tell you John

Has had a tipsy fall ;—

I'm sure there's something going on

With that vile Mary Hall !—

' Miss Bell has bought the sweetest silk,

And I have bought the rest—

Of course, if we go out of town,

Southend will be the best.—

I really think the Jones's house

Would be the thing for us ;—

I think I told you, Mrs. Pope

Has parted with her *nus*—

'Cook, by the way, came up to-day
 To bid me suit myself—
 And what d'ye think? the rats have gnawed
 The victuals on the shelf.—
 And, lord! there's such a letter come,
 Inviting you to fight!
 Of course you don't intend to go—
 God bless you, dear, good-night!'

A PARENTAL ODE TO MY SON, AGED THREE YEARS AND FIVE MONTHS

THOU happy, happy elf!
 (But stop,—first let me kiss away that tear)—
 Thou tiny image of myself!
 (My love, he's poking peas into his ear!)
 Thou merry, laughing sprite!
 With spirits feather-light,
 Untouch'd by sorrow and unsoil'd by sin—
 (Good heavens! the child is swallowing a pin!)
 Thou little tricky Puck!
 With antic toys so funnily bestuck,
 Light as the singing bird that wings the air—
 (The door! the door! he'll tumble down the stair!)
 Thou darling of thy sire!
 (Why, Jane, he'll set his pinafore a-fire!)
 Thou imp of mirth and joy!
 In love's dear chain so strong and bright a link,
 Thou idol of thy parents—(Drat the boy!
 There goes my ink!)
 Thou cherub—but of earth;
 Fit playfellow for Fays, by moonlight pale,
 In harmless sport and mirth,
 (That dog will bite him if he pulls its tail!)
 Thou human humming-bee, extracting honey
 From ev'ry blossom in the world that blows,
 Singing in Youth's Elysium ever sunny—
 (Another tumble!—that's his precious nose!)

Thy father's pride and hope !
(He'll break the mirror with that skipping-rope !)
With pure heart newly stamp'd from Nature's mint—
(Where *did* he learn that squint ?)

Thou young domestic dove !
(He'll have that jug off, with another shove !)
Dear nursling of the hymeneal nest !
(Are those torn clothes his best !)

Little epitome of man !
(He'll climb upon the table, that's his plan !)
Touch'd with the beauteous tints of dawning life—
(He's got a knife !)

Thou enviable being !
No storms, no clouds, in thy blue sky foreseeing,
Play on, play on,
My elfin John !

Toss the light ball—bestride the stick—
(I knew so many cakes would make him sick !)
With fancies buoyant as the thistledown,
Prompting the face grotesque, and antic brisk,
With many a lamb-like frisk—
(He's got the scissors, snipping at your gown !)

Thou pretty opening rose !
(Go to your mother, child, and wipe your nose !)
Balmy, and breathing music like the South,
(He really brings my heart into my mouth !)
Fresh as the morn, and brilliant as its star,—
(I wish that window had an iron bar !)
Bold as the hawk, yet gentle as the dove—
(I'll tell you what, my love,
I cannot write, unless he's sent above !)

A SERENADE

' LULLABY, oh, lullaby !'
Thus I heard a father cry,
' Lullaby, oh, lullaby !'
The brat will never shut an eye ;
Hither come, some power divine !
Close his lids or open mine !

‘Lullaby, oh, lullaby !
What the devil makes him cry ?
Lullaby, oh, lullaby !
Still he stares—I wonder why ?
Why are not the sons of earth
Blind, like puppies, from the birth ?

‘Lullaby, oh, lullaby !’
Thus I heard the father cry :
‘Lullaby, oh, lullaby !
Mary, you must come and try !—
Hush, oh, hush, for mercy’s sake—
The more I sing, the more you wake !

‘Lullaby, oh, lullaby !
Fie, you little creature, fie ;
Lullaby, oh, lullaby !
Is no poppy-syrup nigh ?
Give him some, or give him all,
I am nodding to his fall !

‘Lullaby, oh, lullaby !’
Two such nights, and I shall die !
Lullaby, oh, lullaby !
He’ll be bruised, and so shall I,—
How can I from bedposts keep,
When I’m walking in my sleep ?

‘Lullaby, oh, lullaby !
Sleep his very looks deny—
Lullaby, oh, lullaby !
Nature soon will stupify—
My nerves relax,—my eyes grow dim—
Who’s that fallen—me or him ?’

THE DEAD ROBBERY

‘Here’s that will sack a city.’—*Henry the IVth.*

OF all the causes that induce mankind
To strike against themselves a mortal docket,
Two eminent above the rest we find—
To be in love, or to be out of pocket:
Both have made many melancholy martyrs,
But p’rhaps, of all the felonies de se,
By ponds, and pistols, razors, ropes and garters,
Two thirds have been through want of £. s. d. !

Thus happen’d it with Peter Bunce;
Both in the *dumps* and out of them at once,
From always drawing blanks in Fortune’s lottery,
At last, impatient of the light of day,
He made his mind up to return his clay
Back to the pottery.

Feigning a raging tooth that drove him mad,
From twenty divers druggists’ shops
He begg’d enough of laudanum by drops
T’ effect the fatal purpose that he had;
He drank them, died, and while old Charon ferried him,
The Coroner convened a dozen men,
Who found his death was *phial*-ent—and then
The Parish buried him !

Unwatch’d, unwept,
As commonly a Pauper sleeps, he slept;
There could not be a better opportunity
For bodies to steal a body so ill kept,
With all impunity:

In fact, when Night o’er human vice and folly
Had drawn her very necessary curtains,
Down came a fellow with a sack and spade,
Accustom’d many years to drive a trade,
With that Anatomy more Melancholy
Than Burton’s !

The Watchman in his box was dozing ;
 The Sexton drinking at the Cheshire Cheese ;
 No fear of any creature interposing,
 The human Jackal work'd away at ease :
 He toss'd the mould to left and right,
 The shabby coffin came in sight,
 And soon it open'd to his double-knocks,—
 When lo ! the stiff'un that he thought to meet
 Starts sudden up, like Jacky-in-a-box,
 Upon his seat !

Awaken'd from his trance,
 For so the laudanum had wrought by chance,
 Bunce stares up at the moon, next looking level,
 He spies a shady Figure, tall and bony,
 Thenshudders out these words 'Are—you—the—Devil ?'
 'The Devil a bit of him,' says Mike Mahoney,
 'I'm only com'd here, hoping no affront,
 To pick up honestly a little blunt—'
 'Blunt !' echoes Bunce, with a hoarse croak of
 laughter,—
 'Why, man, I turn'd life's candle in the socket,
 Without a rap in either pocket,
 For want of that same blunt you're looking after !
 'That 's true,' says Mike, 'and many a pretty man
 Has cut his stick upon your very plan,
 Not worth a copper, him and all his trumps,
 And yet he's fetch'd a dacent lot of stuff,
 Provided he was sound and fresh enough,
 And dead as dumps.'

'I take,' quoth Bunce, with a hard wink, 'the fact is,
 You mean a subject for a surgeon's practice,—
 I hope the question is not out of reason,
 But just suppose a lot of flesh and bone,
 For instance, like my own,
 What might it chance to fetch now, at this season ?'
 'Fetch is it ?' answers Mike, 'why prices differ,—
 But taking this same small bad job of ours,
 I reckon, by the pow'rs !
 I've lost ten pound by your not being stiffer !'

‘Ten pounds!’ Bunce echoes in a sort of flurry,
‘Odd zounds!
Ten pounds,
How sweet it sounds,
Ten pounds!’

And on his feet upspringing in a hurry—
It seem’d the operation of a minute—
A little scuffle—then a whack—
And then he took the Body Snatcher’s sack
And poked him in it!

Such is this life!

A very pantomime for tricks and strife!
See Bunce, so lately in Death’s passive stock,
Invested, now as active as a griffin,
Walking—no ghost—in velveteens and smock,
To sell a stiff’un!

A flash of red, then one of blue,
At last, like lighthouse, came in view;
Bunce rang the nightbell; wiped his highlows muddy;
His errand told; sack produced;
And by a sleepy boy was introduced
To Dr. Oddy, writing in his study.
The bargain did not long take time to settle,
‘Ten pounds,
Odd zounds!
How well it sounds,
Ten pounds,’
Chink’d into Bunce’s palm in solid metal.

With joy half-crazed,
It seem’d some trick of sense, some airy gammon,
He gazed and gazed,
At last, possess’d with the old lust of Mammon,
Thought he, ‘With what a very little trouble,
This little capital I now might double—’
Another scuffle of its usual brevity,—
And Doctor Oddy, in his suit of black,
Was finishing, within the sack,
His ‘Thoughts upon Longevity!’

The trick was done. Without a doubt,
The sleepy boy let Bunce and burthen out ;
Who coming to a lone convenient place,
The body stripp'd ; hid all the clothes, and then,
Still favoured by the luck of evil men,
Found a new customer in Dr. Case.

All more minute particulars to smother,

Let it suffice,

Nine guineas was the price
For which one doctor bought the other ;
As once I heard a Preacher say in Guinea,
' You see how one black sin brings on anudder,
Like little nigger pickaninny,
A-riding pick-a-back upon him mudder !'
' Humph !' said the Doctor, with a smile sarcastic,
Seeming to trace

Some likeness in the face,
' So death at last has taken old Bombastic !'
But in the very middle of his joking,—
The *subject*, still unconscious of the scoff—
Seized all at once with a bad fit of choking,
He too was *taken off* !
Leaving a fragment ' On the Hooping Cough.'

Satan still sending luck,
Another body found another buyer :
For ten pounds ten the bargain next was struck,
Dead doctors going higher.
' Here,' said the purchaser, with smile quite pleasant
Taking a glimpse at his departed brother,
' Here's half a guinea in the way of present—
Subjects are scarce, and when you get another,
Let *me* be first.'—Bunce took him at his word,
And suddenly his old atrocious trick did,
Sacking M.D. the third,
Ere he could furnish ' Hints to the Afflicted.'

Flush'd with success,
Beyond all hope or guess,

His new dead robbery upon his back,
Bunce plotted—such high flights ambition takes,—
To treat the Faculty like ducks and drakes,
And sell them all ere they could utter ‘Quack!’
But Fate opposed.—According to the schools,
When men become insufferably bad,

The gods confer to drive them mad;
March hairs upon the heads of April fools!

Tempted by the old demon avaricious,
Bunce traded on too far into the morning;
Till nods, and winks, and looks, and signs suspicious,
Ev’n words malicious,

Forced on him rather an unpleasant warning.

Glad was he to perceive, beside a wicket,

A porter, ornamented with a ticket,

Who did not seem to be at all too busy—

‘Here, my good man,

Just show me if you can,

A doctor’s—if you want to earn a tizzy!’

Away the porter marches,

And with grave face, obsequious precedes him

Down crooked lanes, round corners, under arches;

At last, up an old-fashion’d staircase leads him,

Almost impervious to the morning ray,

Then shows a door—‘There, that’s a doctor’s reckon’d,

A rare Top-Sawyer, let who will come second—

Good day.’

‘I’m right,’ thought Bunce, ‘as any trivet;

Another venture—and then up I give it!’

He rings—the door, just like a fairy portal,

Opens untouch’d by mortal—

He gropes his way into a dingy room,

And hears a voice come growling through the gloom,

‘Well—eh?—Who? What?—Speak out at once!’

‘I will,’ says Bunce.

‘I’ve got a sort of article to sell;

Medical gemmem knows me very well—’

But think Imagination how it shock'd her
 To hear the voice roar out, 'Death! Devil! d—n!
 Confound the vagabond, he thinks I am
 A rhubarb-and-magnesia Doctor!' 'No Doctor!' exclaim'd Bunce, and dropp'd his jaw,
 But louder still the voice began to bellow,
 'Yes,—yes,—odd zounds!—I *am* a Doctor, fellow,
 At law!' The word suffic'd.—Of things Bunce feared the most
 (Next to a ghost)
 Was law,—or any of the legal corps,—
 He dropp'd at once his load of flesh and bone,
 And, caring for no body, save his own,
 Bolted,—and lived securely till four-score,
 From never troubling Doctors any more!

A RISE AT THE FATHER OF ANGLING

TO MR. IZAAC WALTON, AT MR. MAJOR'S THE
 BOOKSELLER'S IN FLEET STREET

MR. WALTON, it's harsh to say it, but as a Parent
 I can't help wishing
 You'd been hung before you publish'd your book, to
 set all the young people a fishing!
 There's my Robert, the trouble I've had with him it
 surpasses a mortal's bearing,
 And all thro' those devilish angling works—the Lord
 forgive me for swearing!
 I thought he were took with the Morbus one day, I did
 with his nasty angle!
 For 'oh dear,' says he, and burst out in a cry, 'oh my
 gut is all got of a tangle!'
 It's a shame to teach a young boy such words—whose
 blood wouldn't chill in their veins
 To hear him, as I overheard him one day, a-talking
 of blowing out brains?¹

¹ Chewing and spitting out (bullocks') brains into the water for ground bait is called *blowing of brains*.—*Salter's Angler's Guide*.

And didn't I quarrel with Sally the cook, and a precious scolding I give her,

'How dare you,' says I, 'for to stench the whole house by keeping that stinking liver?'

'Twas enough to breed a fever, it was! they smelt it next door at the Bagots',—

But it wasn't breeding no fever—not it! 'twas my son a-breeding of maggots!

I declare that I couldn't touch meat for a week, for it all seemed tainting and going,

And after turning my stomach so, they turned to blue-flies, all buzzing and blowing;

Boys are nasty enough, goodness knows, of themselves, without putting live things in their craniums;

Well, what next? but he pots a whole cargo of worms along with my choice geraniums.

And another fine trick, tho' it wasn't found out, till the housemaid had given us warning,

He fished at the golden fish in the bowl, before we were up and down in the morning.

I'm sure it was lucky for Ellen, poor thing, that she'd got so attentive a lover,

As brings her fresh fish when the others deceas'd, which they did a dozen times over!

Then a whole new loaf was short! for I know, of course, when our bread goes faster,—

And I made a stir with the bill in my hand, and the man was sent off by his master;

But, oh dear, I thought I should sink thro' the earth, with the weight of my own reproaches,

For my own pretty son had made away with the loaf, to make pastry to feed the roaches!

I vow I've suffered a martyrdom—with all sorts of frights and terrors surrounded!

For I never saw him go out of the doors but I thought he'd come home to me drowned.

And, sure enough, I set out one fine Monday to visit my married daughter,

And there he was standing at Sadler's Wells, a-performing with real water.

It's well he was off on the further side, for I'd have
 brain'd him else with my patten,
 For I thought he was safe at school, the young wretch !
 a studying Greek and Latin.
 And my ridicule basket he'd got on his back, to carry
 his fishes and gentles ;
 With a belt I knew he'd made from the belt of his
 father's regimentals—
 Well, I poked his rods and lines in the fire, and his father
 gave him a birching,
 But he'd gone too far to be easy cured of his love for
 chubbing and perching.
 One night he never came home to tea, and altho' it
 was dark and dripping,
 His father set off to Wapping, poor man ! for the boy
 had a turn for shipping ;
 As for me I set up, and I sobbed and I cried for all the
 world like a babby,
 Till at twelve o'clock he rewards my fears with two
 gudging from Waltham Abbey !
 And a pretty sore throat and fever he caught, that
 brought me a fortnight's hard nussing,
 Till I thought I should go to my grey-hair'd grave,
 worn out with the fretting and fussing ;
 But at last he was cur'd, and we did have hopes that
 the fishing was cured as well,
 But no such luck ! not a week went by before we'd
 another such spell.
 Tho' he never had got a penny to spend, for such was
 our strict intentions,
 Yet he was soon set up in tackle again, for all boys have
 such quick inventions :
 And I lost my Lady's Own Pocket Book, in spite of
 all my hunting and poking,
 Till I found it chuck-full of tackles and hooks, and
 besides it had had a good soaking.
 Then one Friday morning, I gets a summoning note
 from a sort of a law attorney,
 For the boy had been trespassing people's grounds while
 his father was gone a journey,

And I had to go and hush it all up by myself, in an office
 at Hatton Garden ;
 And to pay for the damage he'd done, to boot, and to
 beg some strange gentleman's pardon.
 And wasn't he once fish'd out himself, and a man had
 to dive to find him,
 And I saw him brought home with my motherly eyes
 and a mob of people behind him ?
 Yes, it took a full hour to rub him to life—whilst I was
 a-screaming and raving,
 And a couple of guineas it cost us besides, to reward
 the humane man for his saving,
 And didn't Miss Crump leave us out of her will, all
 along of her taking dudgeon
 At her favourite cat being chok'd, poor Puss, with
 a hook sew'd up in a gudgeon ?
 And old Brown complain'd that he pluck'd his live
 fowls, and not without show of reason,
 For the cocks looked naked about neck and tails, and
 it wasn't their moulting season ;
 And sure and surely, when we came to enquire, there
 was cause for their screeching and cackles,
 For the mischief confess'd he had picked them a bit,
 for I think he call'd them the hackles.
 A pretty tussle we had about that ! but as if it warn't
 picking enough,
 When the winter comes on, to the muff-box I goes, just
 to shake out my sable muff—
 ' O mercy ! ' thinks I, ' there's the moth in the house ! '
 for the fur was all gone in patches ;
 And then at Ellen's chinchilly I look, and its state of
 destruction just matches—
 But it wasn't no moth, Mr. Walton, but flies—sham
 flies to go trolling and trouting,
 For his father's great coat was all safe and sound, and
 that first set me a-doubting.
 A plague, say I, on all rods and lines, and on young
 or old watery dangles !
 And after all that you'll talk of such stuff as no harm
 in the world about anglers !

And when all is done, all our worry and fuss, why,
 we've never had nothing worth dishing ;
 So you see, Mister Walton, no good comes at last of
 your famous book about fishing.
 As for Robert's, I burnt it a twelvemonth ago ; but
 it turned up too late to be lucky,
 For he'd got it by heart, as I found to the cost of

Your servant,

JANE ELIZABETH STUCKEY.

MORNING MEDITATIONS

LET Taylor preach, upon a morning breezy,
 How well to rise while night and larks are flying—
 For my part, getting up seems not so easy
 By half as *lying*.

What if the lark *does* carol in the sky,
 Soaring beyond the sight to find him out—
 Wherefore am I to rise at such a fly ?
 I'm not a trout !

Talk not to me of bees and such like hums,
 The smell of sweet herbs at the morning prime—
 Only lie long enough, and bed becomes
 A bed of *time*.

To me Dan Phœbus and his care are nought,
 His steeds that paw impatiently about,—
 Let *them* enjoy, say I, as horses ought,
 The first turn-out !

Right beautiful the dewy meads appear,
 Besprinkled by the rosy-fingered girl ;
 What then,—if I prefer my pillow beer
 To early *pearl* ?

My stomach is not ruled by other men's,
 And, grumbling for a reason, quaintly begs
 Wherefore should master rise before the hens
 Have laid the eggs ?

Why from a comfortable pillow start,
 To see faint flushes in the east awaken,
 A fig, say I, for any streaky part,
 Excepting bacon !

An early riser Mr. Gray has drawn,
 Who used to haste, the dewy grass among,
 To meet the sun upon the upland lawn—
 Well—he died young !

With charwomen such early hours agree,
 And sweeps that earn betimes their bite and sup,
 But I'm no climbing boy, and need not be
 All up—all up !

So here I'll lie, my morning calls deferring,
 Till something nearer to the stroke of noon ;—
 A man that's fond precociously of *stirring*,
 Must be a *spoon* !

THE DOCTOR

A SKETCH

'Whatever is, is right.'—*Pope*

THERE once was a Doctor,
 (No foe to the proctor,)
 A physic-concocter,
 Whose dose was so pat,
 However it acted,
 One speech it extracted,—
 'Yes, yes,' said the doctor,
 'I meant it for that !'

And first, all unaisy,
 Like woman that's crazy
 In flies Mistress Casey,
 'Do come to poor Pat
 The blood's running faster !
 He's torn off the plaster—'
 'Yes, yes,' said the Doctor,
 'I meant it for that !'

Anon, with an antic,
Quite strange and romantic,
A woman comes frantic—
‘What could you be at?
My darling dear Aleck,
You’ve sent him oxalic!’
‘Yes, yes,’ said the Doctor,
‘I meant it for that!’

Then in comes another,
Despatch’d by his mother,
A blubbering brother,
Who gives a rat-tat—
‘Oh, poor little sister
Has lick’d off a blister!’
‘Yes, yes,’ said the Doctor,
‘I meant it for that!’

Now home comes the flunkey,
His own powder-monkey,
But dull as a donkey—
With basket and that—
‘The draught for the Squire, Sir,
He chuck’d in the fire, Sir—’
‘Yes, yes,’ said the Doctor,
‘I meant it for that!’

The next is the pompous
Head Beadle, old Bumpus—
‘Lord! here is a rumpus:
That pauper, Old Nat,
In some drunken notion
Has drunk up his lotion—’
‘Yes, yes,’ said the Doctor,
‘I meant it for that!’

At last comes a servant,
In grief very fervent:
‘Alas! Doctor Derwent,
Poor Master is flat!’

He's drawn his last breath, Sir—
That dose was his death, Sir.'
'Yes, yes,' said the Doctor,
'I meant it for that!'

THE GREEN MAN

TOM SIMPSON was as nice a kind of man
As ever lived—at least at number Four,
In Austin Friars, in Mrs. Brown's first floor,
At fifty pounds,—or thereabouts,—per ann.
The Lady reckon'd him her best of lodgers,
His rent so punctually paid each quarter,—
He did not smoke like nasty foreign codgers—
Or play French horns like Mr. Rogers—
Or talk his flirting nonsense to her daughter,—
Not that the girl was light behaved or courtable—
Still on one failing tenderly to touch,
The Gentleman did like a drop too much,
(Tho' there are many such)
And took more Port than was exactly portable.
In fact,—to put the cap upon the nipple,
And try the charge,—Tom certainly *did* tipple.
He thought the motto was but sorry stuff
On Cribb's Prize Cup—Yes, wrong in ev'ry letter—
That 'D—d be he who first cries *Hold Enough!*'
The more cups hold, and if enough, the better.
And so to set example in the eyes
Of Fancy's lads, and give a broadish hint to them,
All his cups were of such ample size
That he got into them.

Once in the company of merry mates,
In spite of Temperance's ifs and buts,
So sure as Eating is set off with *plates*,
His Drinking always was bound up with *cuts!*

Howbeit, such Bacchanalian revels
Bring very sad catastrophes about;
Palsy, Dyspepsy, Dropsy, and Blue Devils,
Not to forget the Gout.

Sometimes the liver takes a spleenful whim
To grow to Strasburg's regulation size,
As if for those hepatical goose pies—
Or out of depth the head begins to swim—
Poor Simpson! what a thing occurred to him!
'Twas Christmas—he had drunk the night before,—
Like Baxter, who so 'went beyond his last'—
One bottle more, and then *one* bottle more,
Till oh! the red-wine *Ruby-con* was pass'd!
And homeward, by the short small chimes of day,
With many a circumbendibus to spare,
For instance, twice round Finsbury Square,
To use a fitting phrase, he *wound* his way.

Then comes the rising, with repentance bitter,
And all the nerves—(and sparrows)—in a twitter,
Till settled by the sober Chinese cup:
The hands, o'er all, are members that make motions,
A sort of wavering, just like the ocean's,
Which has its swell, too, when it's getting up—
An awkward circumstance enough for elves

Who shave themselves;
And Simpson just was ready to go thro' it,
When lo! the first short glimpse within the glass—
He jump'd—and who alive would fail to do it?—
To see, however it had come to pass,
One section of his face as green as grass!

In vain each eager wipe,
With soap—without—wet—hot or cold—or dry,
Still, still, and still, to his astonished eye
One cheek was green, the other cherry ripe!
Plump in the nearest chair he sat him down,
Quaking, and quite absorb'd in a deep study,—

But verdant and not brown,—
What could have happened to a tint so ruddy?
Indeed it was a very novel case,
By way of penalty for being jolly,
To have that evergreen stuck in his face,
Just like the windows with their Christmas holly.

‘ All claret marks,’—thought he—Tom knew his forte—
 ‘ Are red—this colour CANNOT come from Port!’

One thing was plain; with such a face as his,
 ‘Twas quite impossible to ever greet
 Good Mrs. Brown; nay, any party meet,
 Altho’ ’twas such a parti-coloured phiz!
 As for the public, fancy Sarcy Ned,
 The coachman, flying, dog-like, at his head,
 With ‘ Ax your pardon, Sir, but if you please—

Unless it comes too high—

Vere ought a feller, now, to go to buy
 The t’other half, Sir, of that ’ere green cheese?’
 His mind recoil’d—so he tied up his head,
 As with a raging tooth, and took to bed;
 Of course with feelings far from the serene,
 For all his future prospects seemed to be,
 To match his customary tea,
 Black, mixt with green.

Meanwhile, good Mrs. Brown
 Wondered at Mr. S. not coming down,
 And sent the maid up stairs to learn the why;
 To whom poor Simpson, half delirious,

Returned an answer so mysterious
 That curiosity began to fry;
 The more, as Betty, who had caught a snatch
 By peeping in upon the patient’s bed,
 Reported a most bloody, tied-up head,
 Got over-night of course—‘ Harm watch, harm catch,’
 From Watchmen in a boxing-match.

So, liberty or not,—

Good lodgers are too scarce to let them off in
 A suicidal coffin—

The dame ran up as fast as she could trot;
 Appearance,—‘ fiddle-sticks!’ should not deter
 From going to the bed,

And looking at the head:

‘ La! Mister S——, he need not care for her!

A married woman that had had
 Nine boys and gals, and none had turned out bad—

Her own dear late would come home late at night,
 And liquor always got him in a fight.
 She'd been in hospitals—she wouldn't faint
 At gores and gashes fingers wide and deep;
 She knew what's good for bruises and what ain't—
 Turlington's Drops she made a pint to keep.
 Cases she'd seen beneath the surgent's hand—
 Such skulls japann'd—she meant to say trepann'd!
 Poor wretches! you would think they'd been in
 battle,

And hadn't hours to live,
 From tearing horses' kicks or Smithfield cattle,
 Shamefully over-driv!—
 Heads forced to have a silver plate atop,
 To get the brains to stop.
 At imputations of the legs she'd been,
 And neither screech'd nor cried——'
 Hereat she pluck'd the white cravat aside,
 And lo! the whole phenomenon was seen—
 'Preserve us all! He's going to gangrene!'

Alas! through Simpson's brain
 Shot the remark, like ball, with mortal pain;
 It tallied truly with his own misgiving,
 And brought a groan,
 To move a heart of stone—
 A sort of farewell to the land of living!
 And as the case was imminent and urgent,
 He did not make a shadow of objection
 To Mrs. B.'s proposal for a 'surgent,'
 But merely gave a sigh of deep dejection,
 While down the verdant cheek a tear of grief
 Stole, like a dew-drop on a cabbage-leaf.

Swift flew the summons,—it was life or death!
 And in as short a time as he could race it,
 Came Doctor Puddicome, as short of breath,
 To try his Latin charms against *Hic Jacet*.

He took a seat beside the patient's bed,
Saw tongue—felt pulse—examined the bad cheek,—
Poked, strok'd, pinch'd, kneaded it—hemm'd—shook
his head—

Took a long solemn pause the cause to seek,
(Thinking, it seem'd, in Greek,)
Then ask'd—'twas Christmas—'Had he eaten grass,
Or greens—and if the cook was so improper
To boil them up with copper,
Or farthings made of brass ;
Or if he drank his Hock from dark green glass,
Or dined at City Festivals, whereat
There's turtle, and green fat ?'

To all of which, with serious tone of woe,
Poor Simpson answered 'No.'
Indeed he might have said in form auricular,
Supposing Puddicombe had been a monk—
He had not eaten (he had only drunk)
Of any thing 'Particular.'
The Doctor was at fault ;

A thing so new quite brought him to a halt.
Cases of other colours came in crowds,
He could have found their remedy, and soon ;
But green—it sent him up among the clouds,
As if he had gone up with Green's balloon !

Black with Black Jaundice he had seen the skin ;
From Yellow Jaundice yellow,
From saffron tints to sallow ;—
Then retrospective memory lugg'd in
Old Purple Face, the Host at Kentish Town—
East Indians, without number,
He knew familiarly, by heat done Brown,
From tan to a burnt umber,
Ev'n those eruptions he had never seen
Of which the Caledonian Poet spoke,
As '*rashes* growing green'—
'Phoo ! phoo ! a rash grow green !
Nothing of course but a broad Scottish joke !'

Then as to flaming visages, for those
The Scarlet Fever answer'd, or the Rose—
But verdant! that was quite a novel stroke!
Men turn'd to blue, by Cholera's last stage,
In common practice he had really seen;
But Green—he was too old, and grave, and sage,
To think of the last stage to Turnham Green!

So matters stood in-doors—meanwhile without,
Growing in going like all other rumours,
The modern miracle was buzz'd about,
By people of all humours,

Native or foreign in their dialecticals;
Till all the neighbourhood, as if their noses
Had taken the odd gross from little Moses,
Seem'd looking thro' green spectacles.

'Green faces!' so they all began to comment—

'Yes—opposite to Druggists' lighted shops,
But that's a flying colour—never stops—
A bottle-green that's vanish'd in a moment.

Green! nothing of the sort occurs to mind,
Nothing at all to match the present piece;

Jack in the Green has nothing of the kind—
Green-grocers are not green—nor yet green geese!
The oldest Supercargoes or Old Sailors

Of such a case had never heard,

From Emerald Isle to Cape de Verd;

'Or Greenland!' cried the whalers.

All tongues were full of the Green Man, and still
They could not make him out, with all their skill;
No soul could shape the matter, head or tail—
But Truth steps in where all conjectures fail.

A long half hour, in needless puzzle,
Our Galen's cane had rubbed against his muzzle;
He thought, and thought, and thought, and thought,
and thought—

And still it came to nought,

When up rush'd Betty, loudest of Town Criers,

'Lord, Ma'am, the new Police is at the door!

It's B, ma'am, Twenty-four,—

As brought home Mister S. to Austin Friars,
And says there's nothing but a simple case—
He got that 'ere green face
By sleeping in the kennel near the Dyer's !'

THE KEY

A MOORISH ROMANCE

'On the east coast, towards Tunis, the Moors still preserve the keys of their ancestors' houses in Spain ; to which country they still express the hopes of one day returning, and again planting the crescent on the ancient walls of the Alhambra.'—*Scott's Travels in Morocco and Algiers.*

'Is Spain cloven in such a manner as to want closing?'—*Sancho Panza.*

THE Moor leans on his cushion,
With the pipe between his lips ;
And still at frequent intervals
The sweet sherbét he sips ;
But, spite of lulling vapour
And the sober cooling cup,
The spirit of the swarthy Moor
Is fiercely kindling up !

One hand is on his pistol,
On its ornamented stock,
While his finger feels the trigger
And is busy with the lock—
The other seeks his ataghan,
And clasps its jewell'd hilt—
Oh ! much of gore in days of yore
That crooked blade has spilt !

His brows are knit, his eyes of jet
In vivid blackness roll,
And gleam with fatal flashes
Like the fire-damp of the coal ;

His jaws are set, and through his teeth
He draws a savage breath,
As if about to raise the shout
Of victory or Death !

For why ? the last Zebeck that came
And moor'd within the Mole,
Such tidings unto Tunis brought
As stir his very soul—
The cruel jar of civil war,
The sad and stormy reign,
That blackens like a thundercloud
The sunny land of Spain !

No strife of glorious Chivalry,
For honour's gain or loss,
Nor yet that ancient rivalry,
The Crescent with the Cross.
No charge of gallant Paladins
On Moslems stern and stanch ;
But Christians shedding Christian blood
Beneath the olive's branch !

A war of horrid parricide,
And brother killing brother ;
Yea, like to 'dogs and sons of dogs,'
That worry one another.
But let them bite and tear and fight,
The more the Kaffers slay,
The sooner Hagar's swarming sons
Shall make the land a prey !

The sooner shall the Moor behold
Th' Alhambra's pile again ;
And those who pin'd in Barbary
Shall shout for joy in Spain—
The sooner shall the Crescent wave
On dear Granada's walls ;
And proud Mohammed Ali sit
Within his father's halls !

'Alla-il-alla!' tiger-like
Up springs the swarthy Moor,
And, with a wide and hasty stride,
Steps o'er the marble floor;
Across the hall, till from the wall,
Where such quaint patterns be,
With eager hand he snatches down
An old and massive Key!

A massive Key of curious shape,
And dark with dirt and rust,
And well three weary centuries
The metal might encrust!
For since the King Boabdil fell
Before the native stock,
That ancient Key, so quaint to see,
Hath never been in lock.

Brought over by the Saracens
Who fled across the main,
A token of the secret hope
Of going back again;
From race to race, from hand to hand,
From house to house it pass'd;
O will it ever, ever ope
The Palace gate at last?

Three hundred years and fifty-two
On post and wall it hung—
Three hundred years and fifty-two
A dream to old and young;
But now a brighter destiny
The Prophet's will accords;
The time is come to scour the rust
And lubricate the wards.

For should the Moor with sword and lance
At Algesiras land,
Where is the bold Bernardo now
Their progress to withstand?

To Burgos should the Moslem come,
Where is the noble Cid
Five royal crowns to topple down
As gallant Diaz did ?

Hath Xerxes any Pounder now,
When other weapons fail,
With club to thrash invaders rash,
Like barley with a flail ?
Hath Seville any Perez still,
To lay his clusters low,
And ride with seven turbans green
Around his saddle-bow ?

No ! never more shall Europe see
Such Heroes brave and bold,
Such Valour, Faith, and Loyalty,
As used to shine of old !
No longer to one battle-cry
United Spaniards run,
And with their thronging spears uphold
The Virgin and her Son !

From Cadiz Bay to rough Biscay
Internal discord dwells,
And Barcelona bears the scars
Of Spanish shot and shells.
The fleets decline, the merchants pine
For want of foreign trade ;
And gold is scant ; and Alicante
Is seal'd by strict blockade !

The loyal fly, and Valour falls,
Oppos'd by court intrigue ;
But treachery and traitors thrive,
Upheld by foreign league ;
While factions seeking private ends
By turns usurping reign—
Well may the dreaming, scheming Moor
Exulting point to Spain !

Well may he cleanse the rusty Key
With Afric sand and oil,
And hope an Andalusian home
Shall recompense the toil!
Well may he swear the Moorish spear
Through wild Castile shall sweep,
And where the Catalonian sowed
The Saracen shall reap!

Well may he vow to spurn the Cross
Beneath the Arab hoof,
And plant the Crescent yet again
Above th' Alhambra's roof—
When those from whom St. Jago's name
In chorus once arose,
Are shouting Faction's battle-cries,
And Spain forgets to 'Close!'

Well may he swear his ataghan
Shall rout the traitor swarm,
And carve them into Arabesques
That show no human form—
The blame be theirs whose bloody feuds
Invite the savage Moor,
And tempt him with the ancient Key
To seek the ancient door!

THE CAPTAIN'S COW

A NAUTICAL ROMANCE

'Water, water everywhere,
But not a drop to drink.'—*Coleridge.*

It is a jolly Mariner
As ever knew the billows' stir,
Or battled with the gale;
His face is brown, his hair is black,
And down his broad gigantic back
There hangs a platted tail.

In clusters, as he rolls along,
His tarry mates around him throng,
Who know his budget well;
Betwixt Canton and Trinidad
No Sea-Romancer ever had
Such wondrous tales to tell!

Against the mast he leans a-slope,
And thence upon a coil of rope
Slides down his pitchy 'starn;'
Heaves up a lusty hem or two,
And then at once without ado
Begins to spin his yarn:—

'As from Jamaica we did come,
Laden with sugar, fruit and rum,
It blew a heavy gale:
A storm that scar'd the oldest men
For three long days and nights, and then
The wind began to fail.

'Still less and less, till on the mast
The sails began to flap at last,
The breezes blew so soft;
Just only now and then a puff,
Till soon there was not wind enough
To stir the vane aloft.

'No, not a cat's paw anywhere:
Hold up your finger in the air
You couldn't feel a breath;
For why, in yonder storm that burst,
The wind that blew so hard at first
Had blown itself to death.

'No cloud aloft to throw a shade;
No distant breezy ripple made
The ocean dark below.
No cheering sign of any kind;
The more we whistled for the wind
The more it did not blow.

'The hands were idle, one and all;
No sail to reef against a squall;
No wheel, no steering now!
Nothing to do for man or mate,
But chew their cud and ruminate,
Just like the Captain's Cow.

'Day after day, day after day,
Becalm'd the Jolly Planter lay,
As if she had been moor'd:
The sea below, the sky a-top
Fierce blazing down, and not a drop
Of water left aboard!

'Day after day, day after day,
Becalm'd the Jolly Planter lay,
As still as any log;
The parching seamen stood about,
Each with his tongue a-lolling out,
And panting like a dog—

'A dog half mad with summer heat
And running up and down the street,
By thirst quite overcome;
And not a drop in all the ship
To moisten cracking tongue and lip,
Except Jamaica rum!

'The very poultry in the coop
Began to pine away and droop—
The cock was first to go!
And glad we were on all our parts
He used to damp our very hearts
With such a ropy crow.

'But worst it was, we did allow,
To look upon the Captain's Cow,
That daily seemed to shrink:
Deprived of water hard or soft,
For though we tried her oft and oft,
The brine she wouldn't drink;

'But only turn'd her bloodshot eye
And muzzle up towards the sky,
And gave a moan of pain,
A sort of hollow moan and sad,
As if some brutish thought she had
To pray to heav'n for rain ;

'And some times with a steadfast stare
Kept looking at the empty air,
As if she saw beyond,
Some meadow in her native land,
Where formerly she used to stand
A-cooling in the pond.

'If I had only had a drink
Of water then, I almost think
She would have had the half ;
But as for John the Carpenter,
He couldn't more have pitied her
If he had been her calf.

'So soft of heart he was and kind
To any creature lame, or blind,
Unfortunate or dumb :
Whereby he made a sort of vow,
In sympathising with the Cow,
To give her half his rum ;—

'An oath from which he never swerv'd,
For surely as the rum was serv'd
He shared the cheering dram ;
And kindly gave one half at least,
Or more, to the complaining beast,
Who took it like a lamb.

'At last with overclouding skies
A breeze again began to rise,
That stiffen'd to a gale :
Steady, steady, and strong it blew ;
And were not we a joyous crew,
As on the Jolly Planter flew
Beneath a press of sail !

'Swiftly the Jolly Planter flew,
And were not we a joyous crew,
At last to sight the land!
A glee there was on every brow,
That like a Christian soul the Cow
Appear'd to understand.

'And was not she a mad-like thing,
To land again and taste the spring,
Instead of fiery glass:
About the verdant meads to scour,
And snuff the honey'd cowslip flower,
And crop the juicy grass!

'Whereby she grew as plump and hale
As any beast that wears a tail,
Her skin as sleek as silk;
And through all parts of England now
Is grown a very famous Cow,
By giving Rum-and-Milk!'

THE SAUSAGE-MAKER'S GHOST

A LONDON LEGEND

SOMEWHERE in Leather Lane—

I wonder that it was not Mincing,
And for this reason most convincing,
That Mr. Brain

Dealt in those well-minc'd cartridges of meat
Some people like to eat—

However, all such quibbles overstepping,
In Leather Lane he liv'd; and drove a trade
In porcine sausages, though London made,
Call'd 'Epping.'

Right brisk was the demand,
Seldom his goods staid long on hand,

For out of all adjacent courts and lanes
 Young Irish ladies and their swains,
 Such soups of girls and broths of boys !
 Sought his delicious chains,
 Preferr'd to all polonies, saveloys,
 And other foreign toys—
 The mere chance passengers
 Who saw his 'sassengers,'
 Of sweetness undeniable,
 So sleek, so mottled, and so friable,
 Stepp'd in, forgetting ev'ry other thought,
 And bought.

Meanwhile a constant thumping
 Was heard, a sort of subterranean chumping—
 Incessant was the noise
 But though he had a foreman and assistant,
 With all the tools consistent,
 (Besides a wife and two fine chopping boys)
 His means were not yet vast enough
 For chopping fast enough
 To meet the call from streets, and lanes, and passages,
 For first-chop 'sassages.'

However, Mr. Brain
 Was none of those dull men and slow,
 Who, flying bird-like by a railway train,
 Sigh for the heavy mails of long ago ;
 He did not set his face 'gainst innovations
 For rapid operations,
 And therefore in a kind of waking dream
 Listen'd to some hot-water sprite that hinted
 To have his meat chopp'd, as the Times was printed,
 By steam !

Accordingly in happy hour,
 A bran-new Engine went to work
 Chopping up pounds on pounds of pork
 With all the energy of Two-Horse-Power,
 And wonderful celerity—

When lo ! when ev'ry thing to hope responded,
Whether his head was turn'd by his prosperity,
Whether he had some sly intrigue, in verity,
The man absconded !

His anxious Wife in vain
Placarded Leather Lane,
And all the suburbs with descriptive bills,
Such as are issued when from homes and tills
Clerks, dogs, cats, lunatics, and children roam ;
Besides advertisements in all the journals,
Or weeklies or diurnals,
Beginning 'LEFT HIS HOME'—
The sausage-maker, spite of white and black,
Never came back.

Never, alive !—But on the seventh night,
Just when the yawning grave its dead releases,
Filling his bedded Wife with sore affright
In walk'd his grisly Sprite,
In fifty thousand pieces !
'O Mary !' so it seem'd
In hollow melancholy tones to say,
Whilst thro' its airy shape the moonlight gleam'd
With scarcely dimmer ray—
'O Mary ! let your hopes no longer flatter
Prepare at once to drink of sorrow's cup,—
It an't no use to mince the matter—
The Engine's chopped me up !'

EPIGRAMS

AFTER such years of dissension and strife,
Some wonder that Peter should weep for his wife :
But his tears on her grave are nothing surprising,—
He's laying her dust, for fear of its rising.

TO MINERVA. FROM THE GREEK

My temples throb, my pulses boil,
I'm sick of Song and Ode, and Ballad—
So, Thyrsis, take the Midnight Oil
And pour it on a lobster salad.

My brain is dull, my sight is foul,
I cannot write a verse, or read—
Then, Pallas, take away thine Owl,
And let us have a lark instead.

ON THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE STATUES IN
TRAFALGAR SQUARE

If Nelson looks down on a couple of Kings,
However it pleases the Loyals;
'Tis after the fashion of nautical things,
A Sky-scraper over the Royals.

ON THE DEATH OF THE GIRAFFE

THEY say, God wot!
She died upon the spot:
But then in spots she was so rich,—
I wonder which?

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

	PAGE
A little fairy comes at night	114
A poor old king, with sorrow for my crown	99
A spade ! a rake ! a hoe	170
A Wanderer, Wilson, from my native land	173
After such years of dissension and strife	511
Adieu ! those old familiar bounds	121
Adieu, sweet, thou little knowest how	118
Alas ! 'tis melancholy theme to think	290
Alas ! that breathing Vanity should go	67
Ali Ben Ali (did you never read	396
All you that are too fond of Wine	375
Amongst the sights that Mrs. Bond	414
And has the earth lost its so spacious round	100
As Mister B. and Mistress B.	405
Ben Battle was a soldier bold	360
Ben Bluff was a whaler, and many a day	373
Bill Blossom was a nice young man	371
By ev'ry sweet tradition of true hearts	94
Come, <i>gentle</i> Spring ! <i>ethereal mildness</i> come	464
Come, let us set our careful breasts	88
Dear Fanny ! nine long years ago	115
Dear Graham, whilst the busy crowd	306
Even is come ; and from the dark Park, hark	408
Fairest Lady and Noble, for once on a time	457
Farewell, Life ! My senses swim	173
Forget me not ! It is the cry of clay	469
Full of drink and full of meat	156
Gin ! Gin ! a Drop of Gin	162
Go where the waves run rather Holborn-hilly	440
Good morning, Mr. What-d'ye-call	472
Good-morrow to the golden Morning	116
How bravely Autumn paints upon the sky	92

	PAGE
I gaze upon a city	116
I had a vision in the summer light	127
I like you, Mrs. Fry! I like your name	313
I love thee—I love thee	125
I really take it very kind	409
I remember, I remember	83
I saw old Autumn in the misty morn	77
I sawe a Mayd sitte on a Bank	427
I say, little Boy at the Nore	429
I will not have the mad Clytie	124
If kindly words could warm th' unkindly air	92
If Nelson looks down on a couple of Kings	512
I'll tell you a story that 's not in Tom Moore	395
I'm an extremely charitable man	476
Immortal Imogen, crown'd queen above	298
In Brentford town, of old renown	427
In Bunhill Row, some years ago	470
Is there a bitter pang for love removed	100
It is a jolly Mariner	505
It is not death, that sometime in a sigh	93
It is not with a hope my feeble praise	32
It was a merry company	403
It was not in the winter.	126
John Huggins was as bold a man	344
John Trot he was as tall a lad.	369
Lady, wouldst thou heiress be.	79
Let Taylor preach, upon a morning breezy	492
Little eyes that scarce did see	101
Look how the golden ocean shines above	94
Look how the lark soars upward and is gone	98
Love, I am jealous of a worthless man	98
Love, see thy lover humbled at thy feet	98
Love thy Mother, little one	128
Lullaby, oh, lullaby	481
Methought I saw	81
Most delicate Ariel! submissive thing	92
Mother of light! how fairly dost thou go.	85
Mr. Scrub—Mr. Slop—or whoever you be.	317
Mr. Walton, it's harsh to say it	488
My heart is sick with longing, tho' I feed	99
My mother bids me bind my heir	452
My temples throb, my pulses boil	512

	PAGE
No popular respect will I omit	468
No sun—no moon	455
O Andrew Fairservice,—but I beg pardon	337
O Kate ! my dear Partner, through joy	478
O Lady, leave thy silken thread	298
O Mary, I believ'd you true	422
O saw ye not fair Ines	76
O ! take, young Seraph, take thy harp	119
O, 'tis a touching thing to make one weep	96
O'er hill, and dale, and distant sea	84
Of all old women hard of hearing	253
Of all the causes that induce mankind	483
Oh ! Admiral Gam—I dare not mention <i>bier</i> ,	335
Oh ! multifarious man	330
Oh ! well may poets make a fuss	465
Oh ! what is that comes gliding in	417
Oh, when I was a tiny boy	73
On Margate beach, where the sick one roams	381
On that first Saturday in May	418
One day, as I was going by	410
One day—no matter for the month or year	455
One day the dreary old King of Death	384
One more Unfortunate	167
Our village—that 's to say not Miss Mitford's	424
Parry, my man ! has thy brave leg	325
Pity the sorrows of a class of men	161
Rat-tat it went upon the lion's chin	421
Said Nestor, to his pretty wife	395
Shall I rebuke thee, Ocean, my old love	97
She 's up and gone, the graceless Girl	82
She stood breast high amid the corn	80
Shove off there !—ship the rudder, Bill	441
Sleet ! and hail ! and thunder	118
Some dreams we have are nothing else but dreams	143
Somewhere in Leather Lane	509
Spring it is cheery	79
Still glides the gentle streamlet on	115
The curse of Adam, the old curse of all	94
The dead are in their silent graves	88
The lady lay in her bed	158
The man that pays his pence, and goes	393
The March of Mind upon its mighty stilts	444

	PAGE
The Moor leans on his cushions	501
The stars are with the voyager	84
The sun was slumbering in the West	479
There 's a murmur in the air	164
There is a silence where hath been no sound	95
There is dew for the flow'ret	101
There 's some is born with their straight legs	401
There once was a Doctor	493
They say, God wot	512
Thine eyelids slept so beauteously, I deem'd	96
Think, sweetest, if my lids are not now wet	97
Those who much read advertisements and bills	448
Thou happy, happy elf	480
Tim Turpin he was gravel blind	366
'Tis very hard when men forsake	386
To trace the Kilmansegg pedigree	187
To Waterloo, with sad ado	362
Tom Simpson was as nice a kind of man	495
'Twas August—Hastings every day was filling	433
'Twas in a shady Avenue	129
'Twas in that mellow season of the year	1
'Twas in the middle of the night	365
'Twas in the prime of summer time	101
'Twas in the wilds of Lebanon	280
'Twas in the year two thousand and one	107
'Twas off the Wash—the sun went down	275
'Twas twelve o'clock by Chelsea chimes	431
'Twas twelve o'clock, not twelve at night	377
Unfathomable Night! how dost thou sweep	95
We watch'd her breathing thro' the night	127
Welcome, dear Heart, and a most kind good-morrow	87
Well, Doctor.	340
Who does not know that dreadful gulf	279
Who hath ever been lured and bound by a spell	55
Why, Love, why	468
With fingers weary and worn	153
Young ardent soul, graced with fair Nature's truth	93
Young Ben he was a nice young man	358



49
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Poems of Thomas Hood

